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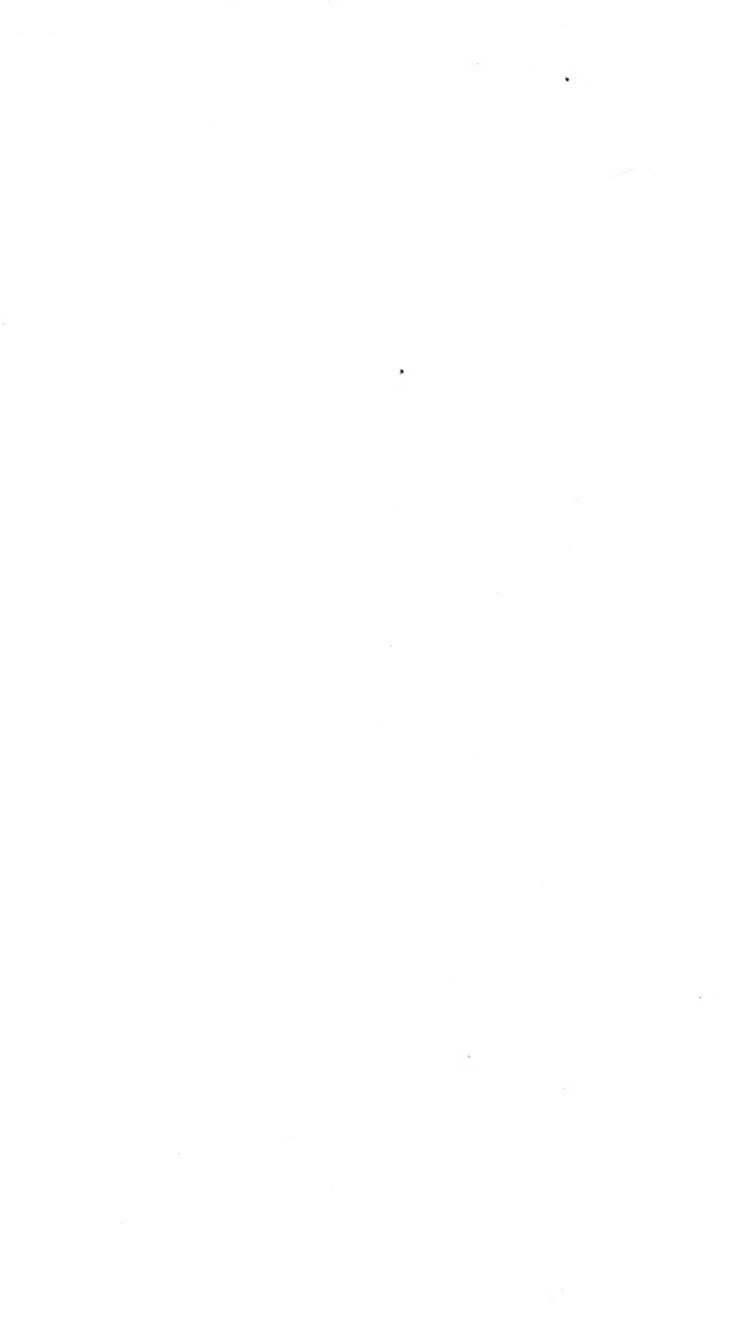
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FIVE BOOKS OF SONG

- I. THE NEW DAY
- II. THE CELESTIAL PASSION
- III. LYRICS
- IV. TWO WORLDS
- V. THE GREAT REMEMBRANCE

FIVE BOOKS OF SONG

BY

RICHARD WATSON GILDER



NEW YORK
THE CENTURY CO.

1894

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DECORATIONS BY H. DE K.



THE NEW DAY

A POEM IN SONGS AND SONNETS



THE NEW DAY

PRELUDE

THE night was dark, though sometimes a faint star
A little while a little space made bright.

Dark was the night and like an iron bar
Lay heavy on the land — till o'er the sea
Slowly, within the East, there grew a light
Which half was starlight, and half seemed to be
The herald of a greater. The pale white
Turned slowly to pale rose, and up the height
Of heaven slowly climbed. The gray sea grew
Rose-colored like the sky. A white gull flew
Straight toward the utmost boundary of the East
Where slowly the rose gathered and increased.
It was as on the opening of a door
By one who in his hand a lamp doth hold,
(Its flame being hidden by the garment's fold) —
The still air moves, the wide room is less dim.

More bright the East became, the ocean turned
Dark and more dark against the brightening sky —
Sharper against the sky the long sea line.
The hollows of the breakers on the shore
Were green like leaves whereon no sun doth shine,
Though white the outer branches of the tree.
From rose to red the level heaven burned ;
Then sudden, as if a sword fell from on high,
A blade of gold flashed on the ocean's rim.

PART I

I — SONNET

(AFTER THE ITALIAN)

I KNOW not if I love her overmuch;
But this I know, that when unto her face
She lifts her hand, which rests there, still, a space,
Then slowly falls — 't is I who feel that touch.
And when she sudden shakes her head, with such
A look, I soon her secret meaning trace.
So when she runs I think 't is I who race.
Like a poor cripple who has lost his crutch
I am if she is gone; and when she goes,
I know not why, for that is a strange art —
As if myself should from myself depart.
I know not if I love her more than those
Who long her light have known; but for the rose
She covers in her hair, I 'd give my heart.

II — SONNET

(AFTER THE ITALIAN)

I LIKE her gentle hand that sometimes strays,
To find the place, through the same book with mine;
I like her feet; and oh, those eyes divine!
And when we say farewell, perhaps she stays
Love-linging — then hurries on her ways;
As if she thought, "To end my pain and thine."
I like her voice better than new-made wine;
I like the mandolin whereon she plays.
And I like, too, the cloak I saw her wear,
And the red scarf that her white neck doth cover,
And well I like the door that she comes through;

I like the riband that doth bind her hair—
But then, in truth, I am that lady's lover,
And every new day there is something new.

III—"A BARREN STRETCH THAT SLANTS TO THE SALT SEA'S GRAY"

A BARREN stretch that slants to the salt sea's gray,—
Rock-strewn, and scarred by fire, and rough with
stubble,—

With here and there a bold, bright touch of color—
Berries and yellow leaves, that make the dolor
More dolorous still. Above, a sky of trouble.

But now a light is lifted in the air;
And though the sky is shadowed, fold on fold,
By clouds that have the lightnings in their hold,
That western gleam makes all the dim earth fair—
The sun shines forth and the gray sea is gold.

IV—LOVE GROWN BOLD

THIS is her picture painted ere mine eyes
Her ever holy face had looked upon.
She sitteth in a silence of her own;
Behind her, on the ground, a red rose lies;
Her thinking brow is bent, nor doth arise
Her gaze from that shut book whose word unknown
Her firm hands hide from her; there all alone
She sitteth in thought-trouble, maidenwise.
And now her lover waiting wondereth
Whether the joy of joys is drawing near;
Shall his brave fingers like a tender breath

That shut book open for her, wide and clear?
From him who her sweet shadow worshipeth
Now will she take the rose, and hold it dear?

INTERLUDE

THE sun rose swift and sent a golden gleam
Across the moving waters to the land;
Then for a little while it seemed to stand
In a clear place, midway 'twixt sea and cloud;
Whence rising swift again it passed behind
Full many a long and narrow cloud-wrought beam
Encased in gold unearthly, that was mined
From out the hollow caverns of the wind.
These first revealed its face and next did shroud,
While still the daylight grew, and joy thereby
Lit all the windy stretches of the sky —

Until a shadow darkened from the east
And sprang upon the ocean like a beast.

PART II

I

THERE was a field green and fragrant with grass
and flowers, and flooded with sunlight, and the air
above it throbbed with the songs of birds. It was yet
morning when a sudden darkness spread over the earth,
and out of the darkness lightning, and after the light-
ning fire that consumed every green thing; and the
singing birds fell dying upon the blackened grass. The

thunder and the flame passed, but it was still dark—till a ray of light touched the field's edge and grew, little by little. Then one who listened heard—not the songs of birds again, but the flutter of broken wings.

II — THE TRAVELER

I MET a traveler on the road
Whose back was bent beneath a load ;
His face was worn with mortal care,
His frame beneath its burden shook,
Yet onward, restless, he did fare
With mien unyielding, fixed, a look
Set forward in the empty air
As if he read an unseen book.

What was it in his smile that stirred
My soul to pity ! When I drew
More near it seemed as if I heard
The broken echo of a tune
Learned in some far and happy June.
His lips were parted, but unmoved
By words. He sang as dreamers do,
And not as if he heard and loved
The song he sang : I hear it now !

He stood beside the level brook,
Nor quenched his thirst, nor bathed his brow,
Nor from his back the burden shook.
He stood, and yet he did not rest ;
His eyes climbed up in aimless quest,
Then close did to that mirror bow—
And, looking down, I saw in place
Of his, my own familiar face.

III—WRITTEN ON A FLY-LEAF OF “SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS”

WHEN shall true love be love without alloy—
Shine free at last from sinful circumstance!
When shall the canker of unheavenly chance
Eat not the bud of that most heavenly joy!
When shall true love meet love not as a coy
Retreating light that leads a deathful dance,
But as a firm fixed fire that doth enhance
The beauty of all beauty! Will the employ
Of poets ever be too well to show
That mightiest love with sharpest pain doth writhe;
That underneath the fair, caressing glove
Hides evermore the iron hand; and though
Love's flower alone is good, if we would prove
Its perfect bloom, our breath slays like a scythe!

IV—“AND WERE THAT BEST!”

AND were that best, Love, dreamless, endless sleep!
Gone all the fury of the mortal day—
The daylight gone, and gone the starry ray!
And were that best, Love, rest serene and deep!
Gone labor and desire; no arduous steep
To climb, no songs to sing, no prayers to pray,
No help for those who perish by the way,
No laughter 'midst our tears, no tears to weep!
And were that best, Love, sleep with no dear dream,
Nor memory of anything in life—
Stark death that neither help nor hurt can know!

Oh, rather, far, the sorrow-bringing gleam,
The living day's long agony and strife!
Rather strong love in pain; the waking woe!

V—“THERE IS NOTHING NEW
UNDER THE SUN”

THERE is nothing new under the sun;
There is no new hope or despair;
The agony just begun
Is as old as the earth and the air.
My secret soul of bliss
Is one with the singing stars,
And the ancient mountains miss
No hurt that my being mars.

I know as I know my life,
I know as I know my pain,
That there is no lonely strife,
That he is mad who would gain
A separate balm for his woe,
A single pity and cover;
The one great God I know
Hears the same prayer over and over.

I know it because at the portal
Of Heaven I bowed and cried,
And I said: “Was ever a mortal
Thus crowned and crucified!
My praise thou hast made my blame;
My best thou hast made my worst;
My good thou hast turned to shame;
My drink is a flaming thirst.”

But scarce my prayer was said
 Ere from that place I turned;
 I trembled, I hung my head,
 My cheek, shame-smitten, burned;
 For there where I bowed down
 In my boastful agony,
 I thought of thy cross and crown—
 O Christ! I remembered thee.

VI—LOVE'S CRUELTY

“AND this, then, is thy love,” I hear thee say,
 “And dost thou love, and canst thou torture so?
 Ah, spare me, if thou lov’st me, this last woe!”
 But I am not my own; I must obey
 My master; I am slave to LOVE; his sway
 Is cruel as the grave. When he says Go!
 I go; when he says Come! I come. I know
 No law but his. When he says Slay! I slay.
 As cruel as the grave? Yes—crueler.
 Cruel as light that pours its stinging flood
 Across the dark, and makes an anguished stir
 Of life. Cruel as life that sends through blood
 Of mortal the immortal pang and spur.
 Cruel as thy remorseless maidenhood.

INTERLUDE

THE cloud was thick that hid the sun from sight
 And over all a shadowy roof outspread,
 Making the day dim with another night—
 Not dark like that which passed, but oh! more dread

For the clear sunlight that had gone before
 And prophecy of that which yet should be.
 Like snow at night the wind-blown hills of sand
 Shone with an inward gleam far down the land:
 Beneath the lowering sky black was the sea
 Across whose waves a bird came flying low,—
 Borne swift on the wind with wing-beat halt and slow,—
 From out the dull east toward the foamy shore.
 There was an awful waiting in the earth
 As if a mystery greatedened to its birth.
 Though late it seemed, the day was just begun
 When lo! at last, the many-colored bow
 Stood in the heavens over against the sun.

PART III

I—“MY LOVE FOR THEE DOTH MARCH LIKE ARMED MEN”

MY love for thee doth march like arméd men,
 Against a queenly city they would take.
 Along the army's front its banners shake;
 Across the mountain and the sun-smit plain
 It steadfast sweeps as sweeps the steadfast rain;
 And now the trumpet makes the still air quake,
 And now the thundering cannon doth awake
 Echo on echo, echoing loud again.
 But, lo! the conquest higher than bard e'er sung:
 Instead of answering cannon, proud surrender!
 Joyful the iron gates are open flung
 And, for the conqueror, welcome gay and tender!
 Oh, bright the invader's path with tribute flowers,
 While comrade flags flame forth on wall and towers!

II—"I WILL BE BRAVE FOR THEE"

I WILL be brave for thee, dear heart; for thee
My boasted bravery forego. I will
For thee be wise, or lose my little skill;
Coward or brave; wise, foolish; bond or free.
No grievous cost in anything I see
That brings thee bliss, or only keeps thee, still,
In painless peace. So heaven thy cup but fill,
Be empty mine unto eternity!
Come to me, Love, and let me touch thy face!
Lean to me, Love; breathe on me thy dear breath!
Fly from me, Love, to some far hiding-place,
If thy one thought of me or hindereth
Or hurteth thy sweet soul—then grant me grace
To be forgotten, though that grace be death!

III—"LOVE ME NOT, LOVE, FOR THAT I
FIRST LOVED THEE"

LOVE me not, Love, for that I first loved thee;
Nor love me, Love, for thy sweet pity's sake,
In knowledge of the mortal pain and ache
Which is the fruit of love's blood-veined tree.
Let others for my love give love to me;
From other souls, oh, gladly will I take,
This burning, heart-dry thirst of love to slake,
What seas of human pity there may be!
Nay, nay, I care no more how love may grow,
So that I hear thee answer to my call!
Love me because my piteous tears do flow,
Or that my love for thee did first befall.
Love me or late or early, fast or slow—
But love me, Love, for love is all in all!

IV — BODY AND SOUL

I

O THOU my Love, love first my lonely soul !
Then shall this too unworthy body of mine
Be loved by right and accident divine.
Forget the flesh, that the pure spirit's goal
May be the spirit ; let that stand the whole
Of what thou lov'st in me. So will the shine
Of soul that strikes on soul make fair and fine
This earthy tenement. Thou shalt extol
The inner, that the outer lovelier seem.
Remember well that thy true love doth fear
No deadlier foe than the impassioned dream
Should drive thee to him, and should hold thee near—
Near to the body, not the soul of him.
Love first my soul and then both will be dear.

II

But, Love, for me thy body was the first.
One day I wandered idly through the town,
Then entered a cathedral's silence brown
Which sudden thrilled with a strange heavenly burst
Of light and music. Lo ! that traveler durst
Do nothing now but worship and fall down.
He thought to rest, as doth some tired clown
Who sinks in longed-for sleep, but there immersed
Finds restless vision on vision of beauty rare.
Moved by thy body's outer majesty
I entered in thy silent, sacred shrine ;
'T was then, all suddenly and unaware,
Thou didst reveal, O maiden Love ! to me,
This beautiful, singing, holy soul of thine.

V — “THY LOVER, LOVE, WOULD HAVE
SOME NOBLER WAY”

THY lover, Love, would have some nobler way
To tell his love, his noble love to tell,
Than rhymes set ringing like a silver bell.
Oh, he would lead an army, great and gay,
From conquering to conquer, day by day!
And when the walls of a proud citadel
At summons of his guns far-echoing fell,—
That thunder to his Love should murmuring say:
Thee only do I love, dear Love of mine!
And while men cried: Behold how brave a fight!
She should read well, oh well! each new emprise:
This to her lips, this to my lady's eyes!
And though the world were conquered, line on line,
Still would his love be speechless, day and night.

VI — LOVE'S JEALOUSY

OF other men I know no jealousy,
Nor of the maid who holds thee close, oh close!
But of the June-red, summer-scented rose,
And of the barred and golden sunset sky
That wins the soul of thee through thy deep eye;
And of the breeze by thee beloved, that goes
O'er thy dear hair and brow; the song that flows
Into thy heart of hearts, where it may die.
I would I were one moment that sweet show
Of flower; or breeze beloved that toucheth all;
Or sky that through the summer eve doth burn.
I would I were the song thou lovest so,
At sound of me to have thine eyelid fall;—
But I would then to something human turn.

VII—LOVE’S MONOTONE

THOU art so used, Love, to thine own bird’s song,—
 Sung to thine ear in love’s low monotone,
 Sung to thee only, Love, to thee alone
 Of all the listening world,—that I among
 My doubts find this the leader of the throng:
 Haply the music hath accustomed grown
 And no more music is to thee; my own
 Too faithful argument works its own wrong.
 Love, Love, and must I learn for thy sweet sake
 The art of silence?—Ah, then hide the light
 Of thy dear countenance, lest the music wake!
 Yet should thy bird at last fall silent quite,
 Would not thy heart an unused sorrow take?
 Think not of me but of thyself to-night.

VIII—“ONCE ONLY”

ONCE only, Love, may love’s sweet song be sung;
 But once, Love, at our feet love’s flower is flung;
 Once, Love, once only, Love, can we be young;
 Say shall we love, dear Love, or shall we hate!

Once only, Love, will burn the blood-red fire;
 But once awakeneth the wild desire;
 Love pleadeth long, but what if Love should tire!
 Now shall we love, dear Love, or shall we wait!

The day is short, the evening cometh fast;
 The time of choosing, Love, will soon be past;
 The outer darkness falleth, Love, at last;
 Love, let us love ere it be late,—too late!

IX—DENIAL

WHEN some new thought of love in me is born
Then swift I seek a token fair and meet
That may unblamed thy blessed vision greet;
Whether it be a rose, not bloodless torn
From that June tree which hideth many a thorn,
Or but a simple, loving message, sweet
With summer's heart and mine,—these at thy feet
I straightway fling; but all with maiden scorn
Thou spurnest. What to thee is token or sign,
Who dost deny the thing wherefor it stands!
Then I seem foolish in my sight and thine,
Like one who eager proffers empty hands.
Thou only callest these my gifts unfine,
While men are praising them in distant lands.

X—"ONCE WHEN WE WALKED WITHIN
A SUMMER FIELD"

ONCE when we walked within a summer field
I plucked the flower of immortality,
And said, "Dear Love of mine, I give to thee
This flower of flowers of all the round year's yield!"
'T was then thou stoop'd'st, and with one hand didst
shield
Thy sun-dazed eyes, and, flinging the other free,
Spurned from thee that white blossom utterly.
But, Love! the immortal cannot so be killed.
The generations shall behold thee stand
Against that western glow in grass dew-wet—
Lord of my life, and lady of the land.

Nor maid nor lover shall the world forget,
Nor that disdainful wafture of thy hand.
Thou scornful! sun and flower shall find thee yet.

XI—SONG

I LOVE her gentle forehead,
And I love her tender hair;
I love her cool, white arms,
And her neck where it is bare.

I love the smell of her garments;
I love the touch of her hands;
I love the sky above her,
And the very ground where she stands.

I love her doubting and anguish;
I love the love she withholds;
I love my love that loveth her
And anew her being molds.

XII—LISTENING TO MUSIC

• WHEN on that joyful sea
Where billow on billow breaks; where swift waves follow
Waves, and hollow calls to hollow;
Where sea-birds swirl and swing,
And winds through the rigging shrill and sing;
Where night is one vast starless shade;
Where thy soul not afraid,
Though all alone unlonely,
Wanders and wavers, wavers wandering;
On that accurséd sea

One moment only,
Forget one moment, Love, thy fierce content ;
Back let thy soul be bent,—
Think back, dear Love, O Love, think back to me !

XIII—"A SONG OF THE MAIDEN MORN"

A SONG of the maiden morn,
A song for my little maid,
Of the silver sunlight born !

But I am afraid, afraid,
When I come my maid may be
Nothing, there, but a shade.

But oh, her shadow is more to me
Than the shadowless light of eternity !

XIV—WORDS IN ABSENCE

I WOULD that my words were as my fingers,
So that my Love might feel them move
Slowly over her brow, as lingers
The sunset wind o'er the world of its love.
I would that my words were as the beating
Of her own heart, that keeps repeating
My name through the livelong day and the night;
And when my Love her lover misses,—
Longs for and loves in the dark and the light,—
I would that my words were as my kisses.
I would that my words her life might fill,
Be to her earth, and air, and skies.
I would that my words were hushed and still —
Lost in the light of her eyes.

XV—SONG

THE birds were singing, the skies were gay ;
 I looked from the window on meadow and wood,
 On green, green grass that the sun made white ;
 Beyond the river the mountain stood —
 Blue was the mountain, the river was bright ;
 I looked on the land and it was not good,
 For my own dear Love she had flown away.

XVI—THISTLE-DOWN

FLY, thistle-down, fly
 From my lips to the lips that I love !
 Fly through the morning light,
 Flee through the shadowy night,
 Over the sea and the land,
 Quick as the lark
 Through twilight and dark,
 Through lightning and thunder ;
 Till no longer asunder
 We stand ;
 For thy touch like the lips of her lover
 Moves her being to mine —
 We are one in a swoon divine !
 Fly, thistle-down, fly
 From my lips to the lips that I love !

XVII—"O SWEET WILD ROSES THAT
 BUD AND BLOW"

O SWEET wild roses that bud and blow
 Along the way that my Love may go ;

O moss-green rocks that touch her dress,
And grass that her dear feet may press ;

O maple-tree whose brooding shade
For her a summer tent has made ;
O goldenrod and brave sunflower
That flame before my maiden's bower ;

O butterfly on whose light wings
The golden summer sunshine clings ;
O birds that flit o'er wheat and wall,
And from cool hollows pipe and call ;

O falling water whose distant roar
Sounds like the waves upon the shore ;
O winds that down the valley sweep,
And lightnings from the clouds that leap ;

O skies that bend above the hills ;
O gentle rains and babbling rills ;
O moon and sun that beam and burn —
Keep safe my Love till I return !

XVIII—THE RIVER

I KNOW thou art not that brown mountain-side,
Nor the pale mist that lies along the hills
And with white joy the deepening valley fills ;
Nor yet the solemn river moving wide

Into that valley, where the hills abide
But whence those morning clouds on noiseless wheels
Shall lingering lift and, as the moonlight steals
From out the heavens, so into the heavens shall glide.

I know thou art not this gray rock that looms
Above the water, fringed with scarlet vine ;
Nor flame of burning meadow ; nor the sedge

That sways and trembles at the river's edge.

But through all these, dear heart ! to me there comes
Some melancholy, absent look of thine.

XIX—THE LOVER'S LORD AND MASTER

I PRAY thee, dear, think not alone of me,

But sometimes think of my great master, LOVE ;

His faithful slave he is so far above

That for his sake I would forgotten be —

Though well I know that hidden thus from thee

Not far away my image then might rove,

And his sweet, heavenly countenance would move

Ever thy soul to gentler charity.

So when thy lover's self leaps from his song

Thou him may love not less for his fair Lord.

But that thy love for me grow never small

(As bow long bent twangs not the arrowed cord,

And he doth lose his star who looks too long),

Sometimes, dear heart, think not of me at all.

XX—“A NIGHT OF STARS AND DREAMS”

A NIGHT of stars and dreams, of dreams and sleep ;

A waking into another empty day —

But not unlovely all, for then I say :

“To-morrow !” Through the hours this light doth
creep

Higher in the heavens, as down the heavenly steep

Sinks the slow sun. Another evening gray,

Made glorious by the morn that comes that way ;

Another night, and then To-day doth leap

Upon the world! Oh quick the hours do fly,
Of that new day which brings the moment when
We meet at last! Swift up the shaking sky
Rushes the sun from out its dismal den;
And then the wished for time doth yearn more nigh;
A white robe glimmering in the dark—and then!

XXI—A BIRTHDAY SONG

I THOUGHT this day to bring to thee
A flower that grows on the red rose tree.
I searched the branches,—oh, despair!
Of roses every branch was bare.

I thought to sing thee a birthday song
As wild as my love, as deep and strong.
The song took wing like a frightened bird,
And its music my maiden never heard.

But, Love! the flower and the song divine
One day of the year will yet be thine;
And thou shalt be glad when the rose I bring,
And weep for joy at the song I sing.

XXII—“WHAT CAN LOVE DO FOR THEE, LOVE?”

WHAT can love do for thee, Love?
Can it make the green fields greener;
Bluer the skies, and bluer
The eyes of the blue-eyed flowers?
Can it make the May-day showers
More warm and sweet; serener
The heavens after the rain?

The sunset's radiant splendor
More exquisite and tender ;
The Northern Star more sure ?
Can it take the pang from pain ?
(O Love! remember the curtain
Of cloud that lifted last night
And showed the silver light
Of a star!) Can it make more certain
The heart of the heart of all,
The good that works at the root —
The singing soul of love
That throbs in flower and fruit,
In man and earth and brute,
In hell, and heaven above ?
Can its low voice musical
Make dear the day and the night ?

XXIII—"THE SMILE OF HER I LOVE"

THE smile of her I love is like the dawn
Whose touch makes Memnon sing.
O see where wide the golden sunlight flows—
The barren desert blossoms as the rose !

The smile of her I love — when that is gone,
O'er all the world night spreads her shadowy wing.

XXIV—FRANCESCA AND PAOLO

WITHIN the second dolorous circle where
The lost are whirled, lamenting—thou and I
Stood, Love, to-day with Dante. Silently
We looked upon the black and trembling air;

When lo! from out that darkness of despair
Two shadows light upon the wind drew nigh,
Whose very motion seemed to breathe a sigh —
And there Francesca, and her lover there.
These when we saw, the wounds whereat they bled,
Their love which was not with their bodies slain —
These when we saw, great were the tears we shed;
As, Love, for thee and me love's tears shall rain —
The mortal agony ; the nameless dread ;
The longing, and the passion, and the pain.

XXV — THE UNKNOWN WAY

Two travelers met upon a plain
Where two straight, narrow pathways crossed;
They met and, with a still surprise,
They looked into each other's eyes
And knew that never, oh, never again!
Could one from the other soul be lost.

But lo! these narrow pathways lead
Now each from each apart, and lo!
In neither pathway can they go
Together, in their new, strange need.

Far-off the purple mountains loom,—
Vague and far-off, and fixed as fate,—
Which hide from sight that land unknown
Where, ever, like a carven stone
The setting sun doth stand and wait,
And men cry not: "Too late! too late!"
And sorrow turns to a golden gloom.

But oh, the long journey all unled
By track of traveler o'er the plain —
The stony desert, bleak and rude,
The bruised feet and the tired brain;
And oh, the twofold solitude,
The doubt, the danger, and the dread!

XXVI—THE SOWER

I

A SOWER went forth to sow;
His eyes were dark with woe;
He crushed the flowers beneath his feet,
Nor smelt the perfume, warm and sweet,
That prayed for pity everywhere.
He came to a field that was harried
By iron, and to heaven laid bare;
He shook the seed that he carried
O'er that brown and bladeless place.
He shook it, as God shakes hail
Over a doomed land,
When lightnings interlace
The sky and the earth, and his wand
Of love is a thunder-flail.
Thus did that Sower sow;
His seed was human blood,
And tears of women and men.
And I, who near him stood,
Said: When the crop comes, then
There will be sobbing and sighing,
Weeping and wailing and crying,
Flame, and ashes, and woe.

II

It was an autumn day
When next I went that way.
And what, think you, did I see,
What was it that I heard,
What music was in the air?
The song of a sweet-voiced bird?
Nay—but the songs of many,
Thrilled through with praise and prayer.
Of all those voices not any
Were sad of memory;
But a sea of sunlight flowed,
A golden harvest glowed,
And I said: Thou only art wise,
God of the earth and skies!
And I praise thee, again and again,
For the Sower whose name is Pain.

XXVII—"WHEN THE LAST DOUBT IS
DOUBTED"

When the last doubt is doubted,
The last black shadow flown;
When the last foe is routed;
When the night is over and gone—
Then, Love, oh then! there will be rest and peace:
Sweet peace and rest that never thou hast known.

When the hope that in thee moveth
Is born and brought to sight;
When past is the pain that proveth
The worth of thy new delight—
Oh then, Love! then there will be joy and peace:
Deep peace and joy, bright morning after night.

INTERLUDE

AS melting snow leaves bare the mountain-side
In spaces that grow wider and more wide,
So melted from the sky the cloudy veil
That hid the face of sunrise. Land and ledge
And waste of glittering waters sent a glare
Back to the smiting sun. The trembling air
Lay, sea on sea, along the horizon's edge;
And on that upper ocean, clear as glass,
The tall ships followed with deep-mirrored sail
Like clouds wind-moved that follow and that pass;
And on that upper ocean, far and fair,
Floated low islands all unseen before.
Green grew the ocean shaken through with light,
And blue the heavens faint-flecked with plummy white.
Like pennants on the wind, from o'er the rocks
The birds whirled seaward in shrill-piping flocks —
And through the dawn, as through the shadowy night,
The sound of waves that break upon the shore!

PART IV

I—SONG

LOVE, Love, my love,
The best things are the truest!
When the earth lies shadowy dark below
Oh then the heavens are bluest!
Deep the blue of the sky,
And sharp the gleam of the stars,
And oh, more bright against the night
The Aurora's crimson bars!

II—THE MIRROR

THAT I should love thee seemeth meet and wise,
So beautiful thou art that he were mad
Who in thy countenance no pleasure had;
Who felt not the still music of thine eyes
Fall on his forehead, as the evening skies
The music of the stars feel and are glad.
But o'er my mind one doubt still cast a shade
Till in my thought this answer did arise:
That thou shouldst love me is not wise or meet,
For like thee, Love, I am not beautiful;
And yet I think that haply in my face
Thou findest a true beauty;—this poor, dull,
Disfigured mirror dimly may repeat
A little part of thy most heavenly grace.

III—LIKENESS IN UNLIKENESS

WE are alike, and yet,—oh strange and sweet!—
Each in the other difference discerns;
So the torn strands the maiden's finger turns
Opposing ways, when they again do meet
Clasp each in each, as flame clasps into heat;
So when this hand on this cool bosom burns,
Each sense is lost in the other. So two urns
Do, side by side, the selfsame lines repeat,
But various color gives a lovelier grace,
And each by contrast still more fine has grown.
Thus, Love, it was, I did forget thy face
As more and more to me thy soul was known;
Vague in my mind it grew till, in its place,
Another came I knew not from my own.

IV—SONG

NOT from the whole wide world I chose thee,—
Sweetheart, light of the land and the sea!
The wide, wide world could not inclose thee,
For thou art the whole wide world to me.

V—ALL IN ONE

ONCE when a maiden maidenly went by,
Or when I found some wonder in the grass,
Or when a purple sunset slow did pass,
Or a great star rushed silent through the sky;
Once when I heard a singing ecstasy,
Or saw the moon's face in the river's glass—
Then I remembered that for me, alas!
This beauty must for ever and ever die.
But now I may thus sorrow never more;
From fleeting beauty thou hast torn the pall;
Of beauty, Love, thou art the soul and core;
And though the empty shadow fading fall,—
Though lesser birds lift up their wings and soar,—
In having thee alone, Love, I have all.

VI—"I COUNT MY TIME BY TIMES THAT I MEET THEE"

I COUNT my time by times that I meet thee;
These are my yesterdays, my morrows, noons,
And nights; these my old moons and my new moons.
Slow fly the hours, or fast the hours do flee,

If thou art far from or art near to me ;

- . If thou art far, the bird tunes are no tunes ;
If thou art near, the wintry days are Junes —
Darkness is light, and sorrow cannot be.

Thou art my dream come true, and thou my dream ;
The air I breathe, the world wherein I dwell ;
My journey's end thou art, and thou the way ;
Thou art what I would be, yet only seem ;
Thou art my heaven and thou art my hell ;
Thou art my ever-living judgment-day.

VII—SONG

YEARS have flown since I knew thee first,
And I know thee as water is known of thirst ;
Yet I knew thee of old at the first sweet sight,
And thou art strange to me, Love, to-night.

VIII—THE SEASONS

O STRANGE Spring days, when from the shivering ground
Love riseth, wakening from his dreamful swoond
And, frightened, in the stream his face hath found !

O Summer days, when Love hath grown apace,
And feareth not to look upon Love's face,
And lightnings burn where earth and sky embrace !

O Autumn, when the winds are dank and dread,
How brave above the dying and the dead
The conqueror, Love, uplifts his banner red !

O Winter, when the earth lies white and chill !
Now only hath strong Love his perfect will,
Whom heat, nor cold, nor death can bind nor kill.

IX—"SUMMER'S RAIN AND
WINTER'S SNOW"

SUMMER'S rain and winter's snow
With the seasons come and go ;
 Shine and shower ;
Tender bud and perfect flower ;
Silver blossom, golden fruit ;
 Song and lute,
With their inward sound of pain ;
Winter's snow and summer's rain ;
 Frost and fire ;
Joy beyond the heart's desire —
And our June comes round again.

X—THE VIOLIN

BEFORE the listening world behold him stand ;
The warm air trembles with his passionate play ;
Their cheers shower round him like the ocean spray
Round one who waits upon the stormy strand.
Their smiles, sighs, tears all are at his command ;
And now they hear the trump of judgment-day,
And now one silver note to heaven doth stray
And fluttering fall upon the golden sand.
But like the murmur of the distant sea
Their loud applause, and far off, faint, and weak
Sounds his own music to him, wild and free —
Far from the soul of music that doth speak
In wordless wail and lyric ecstasy
From that good viol pressed against his cheek.

XI—"O SILVER RIVER FLOWING TO
THE SEA"

O SILVER river flowing to the sea,
Strong, calm, and solemn as thy mountains be !
Poets have sung thy ever-living power,
Thy wintry day, and summer sunset hour ;
Have told how rich thou art, how broad, how deep ;
What commerce thine, how many myriads reap
The harvest of thy waters. They have sung
Thy moony nights, when every shadow flung
From cliff or pine is peopled with dim ghosts
Of settlers, old-world fairies, or the hosts
Of savage warriors that once plowed thy waves —
Now hurrying to the dance from hidden graves ;
The waving outline of thy wooded mountains,
Thy populous towns that stretch from forest fountains
On either side, far to the salty main,
Like golden coins alternate on a chain.

Thou pathway of the empire of the North,
Thy praises through the earth have traveled forth !
I hear thee praised as one who hears the shout
That follows when a hero from the rout
Of battle issues, "Lo, how brave is he,
How noble, proud, and beautiful !" But she
Who knows him best—"How tender !" So thou art
The river of love to me !

—Heart of my heart,
Dear love and bride — is it not so indeed ? —
Among your treasures keep this new-plucked reed.

XII—"MY SONGS ARE ALL OF THEE"

My songs are all of thee, what though I sing
Of morning when the stars are yet in sight,
Of evening, or the melancholy night,
Of birds that o'er the reddening waters wing;
Of song, of fire, of winds, or mists that cling
To mountain-tops, of winter all in white,
Of rivers that toward ocean take their flight,
Of summer when the rose is blossoming.
I think no thought that is not thine, no breath
Of life I breathe beyond thy sanctity;
Thou art the voice that silence uttereth,
And of all sound thou art the sense. From thee
The music of my song, and what it saith
Is but the beat of thy heart, throbbed through me.

XIII—AFTER MANY DAYS

DEAR heart, I would that after many days,
When we are gone, true lovers in a book
Might find these faithful songs of ours. "O look!"
I hear him murmur while he straightway lays
His finger on the page, and she doth raise
Her eyes to his. Then, like the winter brook
From whose young limbs a sudden summer shook
The fetters, love flows on in sunny ways.
I would that when we are no more, dear heart,
The world might hold thy unforgotten name
Inviolat in these eternal rhymes.
I would have poets say: "Let not the art
Wherewith they loved be lost! To us the blame
Should love grow less in these our modern times."

XIV—WEAL AND WOE

O HIGHEST, strongest, sweetest woman-soul !
Thou holdest in the compass of thy grace
All the strange fate and passion of thy race ;
Of the old, primal curse thou knowest the whole.
Thine eyes, too wise, are heavy with the dole,
The doubt, the dread of all this human maze ;
Thou in the virgin morning of thy days
Hast felt the bitter waters o'er thee roll.
Yet thou knowest, too, the terrible delight,
The still content, and solemn ecstasy ;
Whatever sharp, sweet bliss thy kind may know.
Thy spirit is deep for pleasure as for woe —
Deep as the rich, dark-caverned, awful sea
That the keen-winded, glimmering dawn makes white.

XV—"OH, LOVE IS NOT A
SUMMER MOOD"

I

OH, Love is not a summer mood,
Nor flying phantom of the brain,
Nor youthful fever of the blood,
Nor dream, nor fate, nor circumstance.
Love is not born of blinded chance,
Nor bred in simple ignorance.

II

Love is the flower of maidenhood ;
Love is the fruit of mortal pain ;
And she hath winter in her blood.

True love is steadfast as the skies,
And once alight she never flies ;
And love is strong, and love is wise.

XVI—“LOVE IS NOT BOND TO ANY MAN ”

I

Love is not bond to any man,
Nor slave of woman, howso fair.
Love knows no architect nor plan,
She is a lawless wanderer,
She hath no master over her,
And loveth not her worshiper.

II

But though she knoweth law nor plan,—
Though she is free as light and air,—
Love was a slave since time began.
Lo, now, behold a wondrous thing :
Though from stone walls she taketh wing
Love may be led by a silken string.

XVII—“HE KNOWS NOT THE PATH OF
DUTY ”

He knows not the path of duty
Who says that the way is sweet ;
But he who is blind to the beauty,
And finds but thorns for his feet.

He alone is the perfect giver
Who swears that his gift is naught ;
And he is the sure receiver
Who gains what he never sought.

Heaven from the hopeless doubter
The true believer makes ;
Against the darkness outer
The light God's likeness takes.

Like the pale, cold moon above her
With its heart of the heart of fire,
My Love is the one true lover,
And hers is the soul of desire.

AFTER-SONG

THROUGH love to light ! Oh wonderful the way
That leads from darkness to the perfect day !
From darkness and from sorrow of the night
To morning that comes singing o'er the sea.
Through love to light ! Through light, O God, to thee,
Who art the love of love, the eternal light of light !

THE CELESTIAL PASSION



PRELUDE

THE CELESTIAL PASSION

O WHITE and midnight sky! O starry bath!
Wash me in thy pure, heavenly, crystal flood;
Cleanse me, ye stars, from earthly soil and scath;
Let not one taint remain in spirit or blood!
Receive my soul, ye burning, awful deeps;
Touch and baptize me with the mighty power
That in ye thrills, while the dark planet sleeps;
Make me all yours for one blest, secret hour!
O glittering host! O high angelic choir!
Silence each tone that with thy music jars;
Fill me even as an urn with thy white fire
Till all I am is kindred to the stars!
Make me thy child, thou infinite, holy night —
So shall my days be full of heavenly light!

PART I

I—ART AND LIFE

SAID the Poet unto the Seer:
How shall I learn to tell
What I know of Heaven and Hell?
I speak, but to ashes turn
The passions that in me burn..
I shout to the skies, but I hear

No answer from man or God.
Shall I cast my lyre to the sod,
Rest, and give over the strife,
And sink in a voiceless life ?

Said the Seer to the Poet: Arise
And give to the seas and the skies
The message that in thee burns.
Thrice speak, though the blue sky turns
Deaf ears, and the ocean spurns
Thy call. Though men despise
The word that from out thy heart
Flameth ; do thou thy part.
Thrice speak it, aloud, I say,
Then go, released, on thy way ;
Live thou deeply and wise ;
Suffer as never before ;
Know joy, till it cuts to the quick ;
Eat the apple, Life, to the core.
Be thou cursed
By them thou hast blessed, by the sick
Whom thou in thy weakness nursed.
With thy strength the faint endue ;
Be praised when 't were better to blame ;
In the home of thy spirit be true,
Though the voice of the street cry shame.
Be silent till all is done,
Then return, in the light of the sun,
And once more sing.
Oh, then fling
Into music thy soul ! Tell the seas
Again all thy thought ; Oh, be strong
Thy voice as the voice of the waves, as the
voice of the trees !

Tell the blast,
That shall shudder as onward it flies
With thy word, with thy song ;
Tell the skies,
And the world, that shall listen at last !

II—THE POET AND HIS MASTER

ONE day the poet's harp lay on the ground,
Though from it rose a strange and trembling sound
What time the wind swept over with a moan,
Or, now and then, a faint and tinkling tone
When a dead leaf fell shuddering from a tree .
And shook the silent wires all tremulously ;
And near it, dumb with sorrow, and alone
The poet sat. His heart was like a stone.

Then one drew near him who was robed in white :
It was the poet's master ; he had given
To him that harp, once in a happy night
When every silver star that shone in heaven
Made music ne'er before was heard by mortal wight.
And thus the master spoke :

“ Why is thy voice
Silent, O poet ? Why upon the grass
Lies thy still harp ? The fitful breezes pass
And stir the wires, but the skilled player's hand .
Moves not upon them. Poet, wake ! Rejoice !
Sing and arouse the melancholy land ! ”

“ Master, forbear. I may not sing to-day ;
My nearest friend, the brother of my heart,
This day is stricken with sorrow, he must part

From her who loves him. Can I sing, and play
Upon the joyous harp, and mock his woe ? ”

“ Alas, and hast thou then so soon forgot
The bond that with thy gift of song did go —
Severe as fate, fixed and unchangeable ?
Even though his heart be sounding its own knell
Dost thou not know this is the poet’s lot :
’Mid sounds of war, in halcyon times of peace,
To strike the ringing wire and not to cease ;
In hours of general happiness to swell
The common joy ; and when the people cry
With piteous voice loud to the pitiless sky,
’T is his to frame the universal prayer
And breathe the balm of song upon the accurséd air ? ”

“ But ’t is not, O my master ! that I borrow
The robe of grief to deck my brother’s sorrow —
Mine eyes have seen beyond the veil of youth ;
I know what Life is, have caught sight of Truth ;
My heart is dead within me ; a thick pall
Darkens the midday sun.”

“ And dost thou call
This sorrow ? Call this knowledge ? O thou blind
And ignorant ! Know, then, thou yet shalt find,
Ere thy full days are numbered ’neath the sun,
Thou, in thy shallow youth, hadst but begun
To guess what knowledge is, what grief may be,
And all the infinite sum of human misery ;
Shalt find that for each drop of perfect good
Thou payest, at last, a threefold price in blood ;
What is most noble in thee,— every thought
Highest and best,— crushed, spat upon, and brought

To an open shame; thy natural ignorance
Counted thy crime; the world all ruled by chance,
Save that the good most suffer; but above
These ills another, cruel, monstrous, worse
Than all before—thy pure and passionate love
Shall bring the old, immitigable curse.”

“And thou who tell’st me this, dost bid me sing?”

“I bid thee sing, even though I have not told
All the deep flood of anguish shall be rolled
Across thy breast. Nor, Poet, shalt thou bring
From out those depths thy grief! Tell to the wind
Thy private woes, but not to human ear,
Save in the shape of comfort for thy kind.
But never hush thy song, dare not to cease
While life is thine. Haply, ’mid those who hear,
Thy music to one soul shall murmur peace,
Though for thyself it hath no power to cheer.

“Then shall thy still unbroken spirit grow
Strong in its silent suffering and more wise;
And as the drenched and thunder-shaken skies
Pass into golden sunset—thou shalt know
An end of calm, when evening breezes blow;
And looking on thy life with vision fine
Shalt see the shadow of a hand divine.”

III—MORS TRIUMPHALIS

I

IN the hall of the king the loud mocking of many at
one;
While lo! with his hand on his harp the old bard is
undone!

One false note, then he stammers, he sobs like a child,
he is failing,
And the song that so bravely began ends in discord and
wailing.

II

Can it be it is they who make merry, 't is they taunting
him?
Shall the sun, then, be scorned by the planets, the tree
by the limb!
These bardlings, these mimics, these echoes, these shadows
at play,
While he only is real; — they shine but as motes in his
day!

III

All that in them is best is from him; all they know he
has taught;
But one secret he never could teach, and they never
have caught —
The soul of his songs, that goes sighing like wind through
the reeds,
And thrills men, and moves them to terror, to prayer,
and to deeds.

IV

Has the old poet failed, then — the singer forgotten his
art?
Why, 't was he who once startled the world with a cry
from his heart;
And he held it entranced in a life-song, all music, all
love;
If now it grow faint and grow still, they have called him
above.

V

Ah, never again shall we hear such fierce music and
sweet—
Surely never from you, ye who mock, for his footstool
unmeet ;
E'en his song left unsung had more power than the note
ye prolong,
And one sweep of his harp-strings outpassioned the
height of your song.

VI

But a sound like the voice of the pine, like the roar of
the sea
Arises. He breathes now ; he sings ; oh, again he is
free.
He has flung from his flesh, from his spirit, their shackles
accursed,
And he pours all his heart, all his life, in one passionate
burst.

VII

And now as he chants those who listen turn pale, are
afraid ;
For he sings of a God that made all, and is all that was
made ;
Who is maker of love, and of hate, and of peace, and
of strife ;
Smiles a world into life ; frowns a hell, that yet thrills
with his life.

VIII

And he sings of the time that shall be when the earth
is grown old ;
Of the day when the sun shall be withered, and shrunken,
and cold ;
When the stars, and the moon, and the sun,—all their
glory o'erpast,—
Like apples that shrivel and rot, shall drop into the Vast.

IX

And onward and out soars his song on its journey sub-
lime,
'Mid systems that vanish or live in the lilt of his rhyme;
And through making and marring of races, and worlds,
still he sings
One theme, that o'er all and through all his wild music
outrings—

X

This one theme: that whate'er be the fate that has hurt
us or joyed ;
Whatever the face that is turned to us out of the void ;
Be it cursing or blessing ; or night, or the light of the
sun ;
Be it ill, be it good ; be it life, be it death, it is ONE ;—

XI

One thought, and one law, and one awful and infinite
power ;
In atom, and world ; in the bursting of fruit and of
flower ;

The laughter of children, and roar of the lion untamed ;
And the stars in their courses — one name that can
never be named.

XII

But sudden a silence has fallen, the music has fled ;
Though he leans with his hand on his harp, now indeed
he is dead ;
But the swan-song he sang shall for ever and ever abide
In the heart of the world, with the winds and the mur-
muring tide.

IV — THE MASTER-POETS

HE the great World-Musician at whose stroke
The stars of morning into music broke ;
He from whose Being Infinite are caught
All harmonies of light, and sound, and thought —
Once in each age, to keep the world in tune
He strikes a note sublime. Nor late, nor soon,
A godlike soul,—music and passion's birth,—
Vibrates across the discord of the earth
And sets the world aright.

Oh, these are they
Who on men's hearts with mightiest power can play —
The master-poets of humanity,
From heaven sent down to lift men to the sky.

PART II

I—A CHRISTMAS HYMN

I

TELL me what is this innumerable throng
Singing in the heavens a loud angelic song?
These are they who come with swift and
shining feet
From round about the throne of God the Lord
of Light to greet.

II

Oh, who are these that hasten beneath the starry sky,
As if with joyful tidings that through the world shall
fly?
The faithful shepherds these, who greatly were
afear'd
When, as they watched their flocks by night,
the heavenly host appeared.

III

Who are these that follow across the hills of night
A star that westward hurries along the fields of light?
Three wise men from the east who myrrh and
treasure bring
To lay them at the feet of him their Lord and
Christ and King.

IV

What babe new-born is this that in a manger cries?
Near on her lowly bed his happy mother lies.

Oh, see the air is shaken with white and
 heavenly wings—
This is the Lord of all the earth, this is the
 King of kings.

II — EASTER

I

WHEN in the starry gloom
They sought the Lord Christ's tomb,
Two angels stood in sight
All dressed in burning white
Who unto the women said:
“Why seek ye the living among the dead?”

II

His life, his hope, his heart,
With death they had no part;
For this those words of scorn
First heard that holy morn,
When the waiting angels said:
“Why seek ye the living among the dead?”

III

O, ye of this latter day,
Who journey the selfsame way —
Through morning's twilight gloom
Back to the shadowy tomb;
To you, as to them, was it said:
“Why seek ye the living among the dead?”

IV

The Lord is risen indeed,
He is here for your love, for your need —
Not in the grave, nor the sky,
But here where men live and die;
And true the word that was said:
“Why seek ye the living among the dead?”

V

Wherever are tears and sighs,
Wherever are children's eyes,
Where man calls man his brother,
And loves as himself another,
Christ lives! The angels said:
“Why seek ye the living among the dead?”

III—A MADONNA OF FRA LIPPO LIPPI

No heavenly maid we here behold,
Though round her brow a ring of gold;
This baby, solemn-eyed and sweet,
Is human all from head to feet.

Together close her palms are prest
In worship of that godly guest;
But glad her heart and unafraid
While on her neck his hand is laid.

Two children, happy, laughing, gay,
Uphold the little child in play;
Not flying angels these, what though
Four wings from their four shoulders grow.

Fra Lippo, we have learned from thee
A lesson of humanity;
To every mother's heart forlorn,
In every house the Christ is born.

IV—COST

BECAUSE Heaven's cost is Hell, and perfect joy
Hurts as hurts sorrow; and because we win
Some boon of grace with the dread cost of sin,
Or suffering born of sin; because the alloy
Of blood but makes the bliss of victory brighter;
Because true worth hath surest proof herein,
That it should be reproached, and called akin
To evil things—black making white the whiter;
Because no cost seems great near this—that He
Should pay the ransom wherewith we were priced;
And none could name a darker infamy
Than that a god was spit upon,—enticed
By those he came to save, to the accurséd tree,—
For this I know that Christ indeed is Christ.

V—THE SONG OF A HEATHEN

(SOJOURNING IN GALILEE, A. D. 32)

I

IF Jesus Christ is a man,—
And only a man,—I say
That of all mankind I cleave to him,
And to him will I cleave alway.

II

If Jesus Christ is a God,—

And the only God,— I swear

I will follow Him through heaven and hell,

The earth, the sea, and the air!

VI—HOLY LAND

THIS is the earth he walked on; not alone

That Asian country keeps the sacred stain;

Ah, not alone the far Judæan plain,

Mountain and river! Lo, the sun that shone

On him, shines now on us; when day is gone

The moon of Galilee comes forth again

And lights our path as his; an endless chain

Of years and sorrows makes the round world one.

The air we breathe, he breathed—the very air

That took the mold and music of his high

And godlike speech. Since then shall mortal dare

With base thought front the ever-sacred sky—

Soil with foul deed the ground whereon he laid

In holy death his pale, immortal head!

VII—ON A PORTRAIT OF SERVETUS

THOU grim and haggard wanderer, who dost look

With haunting eyes forth from the narrow page,

I know what fires consumed with inward rage

Thy broken frame, what tempests chilled and shook!

Ah, could not thy remorseless foeman brook

Time's sure devourment, but must needs assuage

His anger in thy blood, and blot the age

With that dark crime which virtue's semblance took!

Servetus! that which slew thee lives to-day,
 Though in new forms it taints our modern air;
 Still in heaven's name the deeds of hell are done;
 Still on the high-road, 'neath the noonday sun,
 The fires of hate are lit for them who dare
 Follow their Lord along the untrodden way.

VIII—"DESPISE NOT THOU"

DESPISE not thou thy father's ancient creed,
 Of his pure life it was the golden thread
 Whereon bright days were gathered, bead by bead,
 Till death laid low that dear and reverend head.
 From olden faith how many a glorious deed
 Hath lit the world; its blood-stained banner led
 The martyrs heavenward; yea, it was the seed
 Of knowledge, whence our modern freedom spread.
 Not always has man's *credo* proved a snare —
 But a deliverance, a sign, a flame
 To purify the dense and pestilent air,
 Writing on pitiless heavens one pitying name;
 And 'neath the shadow of the dread eclipse
 It shines on dying eyes and pallid lips.

IX—"TO REST FROM WEARY WORK"

TO REST from weary work one day of seven;
 One day to turn our backs upon the world,
 Its soil wash from us, and strive on to Heaven —
 Whereto we daily climb, but quick are hurled
 Down to the pit of human pride and sin.
 Help me, ye powers celestial! to come nigh;
 Ah, let me catch one little glimpse within
 The heavenly city, lest my spirit die.

These be my guides, my messengers, my friends :
Books of wise poets ; the musician's art ;
The ocean whose deep music never ends ;
The silence of the forest's shadowy heart ;
And, too, the brooding organ's solemn blare,
And kneeling multitudes' low-murmuring prayer.

PART III

I—RECOGNITION

I

IN darkness of the visionary night
This I beheld : Wide space and therein God,
God who in dual nature doth abide—
Love, and the Loved One, Power and Beauty's self ;
Him even the spirit's eye might not transfix
But sidelong gazed, fainting before the light.
And forth from God did come,—with dreadful thrill,
And starry music like to million wires
That shiver with the breathings of the dawn,—
Creation, boundless, bodiless, unformed,
And white with trembling fire and light intense,
And outward pulsings like the boreal flame.
One mighty cloud it seemed, nor star, nor earth,
Or like a nameless growth of the under-seas ;
Creation dumb, unconscious, yet alive
With some deep, inward passion unexpressed,
And swift, concentric, never-ceasing urge —
Resolving gradual to one disk of fire.
And as I looked, behold ! the flying rim
Grew separate from the center ; this again

Divided, and the whole still swift revolved,
Ring within ring, and fiery wheel in wheel;
Till, sudden or slow as chanced, the outmost edge
Whirled into fragments, each a separate sun,
With lesser globes attendant on its flight.
These while I gazed turned dark with smoldering fire
And, slow contracting, grew to solid orbs.
Then knew I that this planetary world,
Cradled in light, and curtained with the dawn
And starry eve, was born ; though in itself
Complete and perfect all, yet but a part
And atom of the living universe.

II

Unconscious still the child of the conscious God —
Creation, born of Beauty and of Love,
Beauty the womb and mother of all worlds.
But soon with breathless speed the new-made earth
Swept near me where I watched the birth of things,
Its greatening bulk eclipsing, star by star,
Half the bright heavens. Then I beheld crawl forth
Upon the earth's cool crust most wondrous forms
Wherein were hid, in transmutation strange,
Sparks of the ancient, never-ending fire ;
Shapes moved not solely by exterior law
But having will and motion of their own,—
First sluggish and minute, then by degrees
Monstrous, enorm. Then other forms more fine
Streamed ceaseless on my sight, until at last,
Rising and turning its slow gaze about
Across the abysmal void, the mighty child

Of the supreme, divine Omnipotence —
Creation, born of God, by him begot,
Conscious in MAN, no longer blind and dumb,
Beheld and knew its father and its God.

II — HYMN

SUNG AT THE PRESENTATION OF THE OBELISK TO THE
CITY OF NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 22, 1881

I

GREAT God, to whom since time began
The world has prayed and striven;
Maker of stars, and earth, and man,
To thee our praise is given.
Here, by this ancient Sign
Of thine own Light divine,
We lift to thee our eyes
Thou Dweller of the Skies;
Hear us, O God in Heaven!

II

Older than Nilus' mighty flood
Into the Mid-Sea pouring,
Or than the sea, thou God hast stood —
Thou God of our adoring!
Waters and stormy blast
Haste when thou bid'st them haste;
Silent, and hid, and still,
Thou sendest good and ill;
Thy ways are past exploring.

III

In myriad forms, by myriad names,
Men seek to bind and mold thee;
But thou dost melt, like wax in flames,
The cords that would enfold thee.
Who madest life and light,
Bring'st morning after night,
Who all things did'st create —
No majesty, nor state,
Nor word, nor world can hold thee!

IV

Great God, to whom since time began
The world has prayed and striven;
Maker of stars, and earth, and man,
To thee our praise is given.
Of suns thou art the Sun,
Eternal, holy One;
Who us can help save thou?
To thee alone we bow!
Hear us, O God in heaven!

III—A THOUGHT

ONCE, looking from a window on a land
That lay in silence underneath the sun,—
A land of broad, green meadows, through which poured
Two rivers, slowly widening to the sea,—
Thus as I looked, I know not how nor whence,
Was born into my unexpectant soul
That thought, late learned by anxious-witted man,
The infinite patience of the Eternal Mind.

IV—THE VOICE OF THE PINE

'T IS night upon the lake. Our bed of boughs
Is built where, high above, the pine-tree soughs.
'T is still — and yet what woody noises loom
Against the background of the silent gloom !
One well might hear the opening of a flower
If day were hushed as this. A mimic shower
Just shaken from a branch, how large it sounded,
As 'gainst our canvas roof its three drops bounded !
Across the rumpling waves the hoot-owl's bark
Tolls forth the midnight hour upon the dark.
What mellow booming from the hills doth come ? —
The mountain quarry strikes its mighty drum.

Long had we lain beside our pine-wood fire,
From things of sport our talk had risen higher.
How frank and intimate the words of men
When tented lonely in some forest glen !
No dallying now with masks, from whence emerges
Scarce one true feature forth. The night-wind urges
To straight and simple speech. So we had thought
Aloud ; no secrets but to light were brought.
The hid and spiritual hopes, the wild,
Unreasoned longings that, from child to child,
Mortals still cherish (though with modern shame) —
To these, and things like these, we gave a name ;
And as we talked, the intense and resinous fire
Lit up the towering boles, till nigh and nigher
They gathered round, a ghostly company,
Like beasts who seek to know what men may be.

Then to our hemlock beds, but not to sleep —
For listening to the stealthy steps that creep

About the tent, or falling branch, but most
A noise was like the rustling of a host,
Or like the sea that breaks upon the shore —
It was the pine-tree's murmur. More and more
It took a human sound. These words I felt
Into the skyey darkness float and melt :

“ Heardst thou these wanderers reasoning of a time
When men more near the Eternal One shall climb ?
How like the new-born child, who cannot tell
A mother's arm that wraps it warm and well !
Leaves of His rose ; drops in His sea that flow, —
Are they, alas, so blind they may not know
Here, in this breathing world of joy and fear,
They can no nearer get to God than here.”

V—MORNING AND NIGHT

I

THE mountain that the morn doth kiss
Glad greets its shining neighbor ;
Lord ! heed the homage of our bliss,
The incense of our labor.

II

Now the long shadows eastward creep,
The golden sun is setting ;
Take, Lord ! the worship of our sleep,
The praise of our forgetting.

VI—"DAY UNTO DAY UTTERETH
SPEECH"

THE speech that day doth utter, and the night,
Full oft to mortal ears it hath no sound;
Dull are our eyes to read upon the ground
What 's written there; and stars are hid by light.
So when the dark doth fall, awhile our sight
Kens the unwonted orbs that circle round,
Then quick in sleep our human sense is bound—
Speechless for us the starry heavens and bright.
But when the day doth close there is one word
That 's writ amid the sunset's golden embers;
And one at morn; by them our hearts are stirred:
Splendor of Dawn, and Evening that remembers;
These are the rhymes of God; thus, line on line,
Our souls are moved to thoughts that are divine.

PART IV

I—THE SOUL

THREE messengers to me from heaven came
And said: "There is a deathless human soul;—
It is not lost, as is the fiery flame
That dies into the undistinguished whole.
Ah, no; it separate is, distinct as God—
Nor any more than He can it be killed;
Then fearless give thy body to the clod,
For nought can quench the light that once it
filled!"

Three messengers — the first was human LOVE ;
The second voice came crying in the night
With strange and awful music from above ;
None who have heard that voice forget it quite ;
BIRTH is it named ; the third, O, turn not pale !
'T was DEATH to the undying soul cried, Hail !

II—"WHEN LOVE DAWNED"

WHEN love dawned on that world which is my mind,
Then did the outer world wherein I went
Suffer a sudden, strange transfiguration ;
It was as if new sight were given the blind.
Then where the shore to the wide sea inclined
I watched with new eyes the new sun's ascent ;
My heart was stirred within me as I leant
And listened to a voice in every wind.
O purple sea ! O joy beyond control !
O land of love and youth ! O happy throng !
Were ye then real, or did ye only seem ?
Dear is that morning twilight of the soul,—
The mystery, the waking voice of song,—
For now I know it was not all a dream.

III—LOVE AND DEATH

I

Now who can take from us what we have known—
We that have looked into each other's eyes ?
Though sudden night should blacken all the skies,
The day is ours, and what the day has shown.

What we have seen and been, hath not this grown
Part of our very selves? We, made love-wise,
What power shall slay our living memories,
And who shall take from us what is our own?
So, when a shade of the last parting fell,
This thought gave peace, as he deep comfort hath
Who, thirsting, drinks cool waters from a well.
But soon I felt more near that fatal breath;
More near he drew, till I his face could tell,
Till then unseen, unknown — I looked on Death.

II

We know not where they tarry who have died;
The gate wherein they entered is made fast;
No living mortal hath seen one who passed
Hither, from out that darkness deep and wide.
We lean on Faith; and some less wise have cried:
“Behold the butterfly, the seed that ’s cast!”
Vain hopes that fall like flowers before the blast!
What man can look on Death unterrified?—
Who love can never die! They are a part
Of all that lives beneath the summer sky;
With the world’s living soul their souls are one;
Nor shall they in vast nature be undone
And lost in the general life. Each separate heart
Shall live, and find its own, and never die.

IV—FATHER AND CHILD

BENEATH the deep and solemn midnight sky,
At this last verge and boundary of time
I stand, and listen to the starry chime
That sounds to the inward ear, and will not die.

Now do the thoughts that daily hidden lie
Arise, and live in a celestial clime,—
Unutterable thoughts, most high, sublime,—
Crossed by one dread that frights mortality.
Thus, as I muse, I hear my little child
Sob in its sleep within the cottage near —
My own dear child! Gone is that mortal doubt!
The Power that drew our lives forth from the wild
Our Father is; we shall to him be dear,
Nor from his universe be blotted out!

V—“BEYOND THE BRANCHES OF THE
PINE ”

BEYOND the branches of the pine
The golden sun no more doth shine,
But still the solemn afterglow
Floods the deep heavens with light divine.

The night-wind stirs the corn-field near,
The gray moon turns to silver clear,
And one by one the glimmering stars
In the blue dome of heaven appear.

Now do the mighty hosts of light
Across the darkness take their flight;
They rise above the eastern hill
And silent journey through the night.

And there beneath the starry zone,
In the deep, narrow grave, alone,
Rests all that mortal was of her,
The purest spirit I have known.

VI—AN AUTUMN MEDITATION

As the long day of cloud and storm and sun
Declines into the dark and silent night,
So passed the old man's life from human gaze ;
But not till sunset, full of lovely light
And color that the day might not reveal,
Bathed in soft gloom the landscape.

Thus kind Heaven
Let me, too, die when Autumn holds the year,—
Serene, with tender hues, and bracing airs,—
And near me those I love ; with no black thoughts,
Nor dread of what may come ! Yea, when I die
Let me not miss from nature the cool rush
Of northern winds ; let Autumn sunset skies
Be golden ; let the cold, clear blue of night
Whiten with stars as now ! then shall I fade
From life to life—pass on the year's full tide
Into the swell and vast of the outer sea
Beyond this narrow world.

For Autumn days
To me not melancholy are, but full
Of joy and hope, mysterious and high ;
And with strange promise rife. Then it meseems
Not failing is the year, but gathering fire
Even as the cold increases.

Grows a weed
More richly here beside our mellow seas
That is the Autumn's harbinger and pride.
When fades the cardinal-flower, whose heart-red bloom

Glows like a living coal upon the green
 Of the midsummer meadows, then how bright,
 How deepening bright like mounting flame doth burn
 The goldenrod upon a thousand hills!
 This is the Autumn's flower, and to my soul
 A token fresh of beauty and of life,
 And life's supreme delight.

When I am gone,
 Something of me I would might subtly pass
 Within these flowers twain of all the year;
 So might my spirit send a sudden stir
 Into the hearts of those who love these hills,
 These woods, these waves, and meadows by the sea.

VII—"CALL ME NOT DEAD"

CALL me not dead when I, indeed, have gone
 Into the company of the everliving
 High and most glorious poets! Let thanksgiving
 Rather be made. Say: "He at last hath won
 Rest and release, converse supreme and wise,
 Music and song and light of immortal faces;
 To-day, perhaps, wandering in starry places,
 He hath met Keats, and known him by his eyes.
 To-morrow (who can say?) Shakespeare may pass,
 And our lost friend just catch one syllable
 Of that three-centuried wit that kept so well;
 Or Milton; or Dante, looking on the grass
 Thinking of Beatrice, and listening still
 To chanted hymns that sound from the heavenly hill."

VIII—"EACH MOMENT HOLY IS"

EACH moment holy is, for out from God
Each moment flashes forth a human soul.
Holy each moment is, for back to him
Some wandering soul each moment home returns.

IX—"WHEN TO SLEEP I MUST"

WHEN to sleep I must
Where my fathers sleep ;
When fulfilled the trust,
And the mourners weep ;
When, though free from rust,
Sword hath lost its worth —
Let me bring to earth
No dishonored dust.

X—TO A DEPARTED FRIEND

DEAR friend, who lovedst well this pleasant life !
One year ago it is this very day
Since thou didst take thy unaccompanied way
Into the silent land, from out the strife
And joyful tumult of the world. The knife
Wherewith that sorrow cut us, still doth stay,
And we, to whom thou daily didst betray
Thy gentle soul, with faith and worship rife,
Love thee not less but more —as time doth go
And we too hasten toward that land unknown
Where those most dear are gathering one by one.

The power divine that here did touch thy heart —
Hath this withdrawn from thee, where now thou art ?
Would thou indeed couldst tell what thou dost know !

XI—"THE EVENING STAR"

THE evening star trembles and hides from him
Who fain would hold it with imperious stare ;
Yet, to the averted eye, lo ! unaware
It shines serene, no longer shy and dim.
Oh, slow and sweet, its chalice to the brim
Fills the leaf-shadowed grape with rich and rare
Cool sunshine, caught from the white circling air !
Home from his journey to the round world's rim,—
Through lonely lands, through cloudy seas and vex,—
At last the Holy Grail met Launfal's sight.
So when my friend lost him who was her next
Of soul,—life of her life,—all day the fight
Raged with a dumb and pitiless God. Perplexed
She slept. Heaven sent its comfort in the night.

XII—LIFE

I

GREAT Universe — what dost thou with thy dead !
Now thinking on the myriads that have gone
Into a seeming blank oblivion,
With here and there a most resplendent head,—
Eyes of such trancing sweetness, or so dread,
That made the soul to quake who looked thereon,—
All utterly wiped out, dismissed, and done ;
Lost, speechless, viewless, and forever fled !

Myriad on myriad, past the power to count ;—
 Where are they, thou dumb Nature ? Do they shine,
 Released from separate life, in summer airs,
 On moony seas, in dawns ? — or up the stairs
 Of spiritual being slowly mount
 And by degrees grow more and more divine ?

II

Ah, thou wilt never answer to our call,
 Thou Voiceless One — nought in thee can be stirred,
 What though the soul, like to a frightened bird,
 Dash itself wildly 'gainst thy mountain-wall.
 From Nature comes no answer, though we fall
 In utmost anguish praying to be heard,
 Or peer below, or our brave spirits gird
 For steep and starry flight ; 't is silent all.
 In vain to question — save the heart of man,
 The throbbing human heart, that still doth keep
 Its truth, love, hope, its high and quenchless faith.
 By day, by night, when all else faints in sleep,
 "Nought is but Life," it cries ; "there is no death ;
 Life, Life doth only live, since Life began."

XIII — THE FREED SPIRIT

BROTHER of sorrow and mortality !
 Not always shall we chide the failing flesh
 That lets the netted soul to silence fly,
 Like a wild bird that breaks the treacherous mesh ;
 Not always shall men curse in stormy sky
 The laughter and the fury of a Power
 That sees its chance-born children sink and die —
 Hurling or death or life for dole or dower.

Who deep his spirit searches can deny
Oh nevermore, that life doth leave a trace
Of something not all heavenly ; though we try
Daily to turn toward Heaven a steadfast face.
Even grief assoils us with its poisonous breath —
Then free our spirits utterly, pure Death !

XIV—UNDYING LIGHT

I

WHEN in the golden western summer skies
A flaming glory starts, and slowly fades
Through crimson tone on tone to deeper shades,
There falls a silence, while the daylight dies
Lingering — but not with human agonies
That tear the soul, or terror that degrades ;
A holy peace the failing world pervades,
Nor any fear of that which onward lies.
For well, ah well, the darkened vale recalls
A thousand times ten thousand vanished suns ;
Ten thousand sunsets from whose blackened walls
Reflamed the white and living day that runs,
In light which brings all beauty to the birth,
Deathless forever round the ancient earth.

II

O thou the Lord and Maker of life and light !
Full heavy are the burdens that do weigh
Our spirits earthward, as through twilight gray
We journey to the end and rest of night ;

Though well we know to the deep inward sight
Darkness is but thy shadow, and the day
Where thou art never dies, but sends its ray
Through the wide universe with restless might.
O Lord of Light, steep thou our souls in thee!
That when the daylight trembles into shade,
And falls the silence of mortality,
And all is done, we shall not be afraid,
But pass from light to light; from earth's dull gleam
Into the very heart and heaven of our dream.

LYRICS



LYRICS

PART I

ODE

I

I AM the spirit of the morning sea ;
I am the awakening and the glad surprise ;
I fill the skies
With laughter and with light.
Not tears, but jollity
At birth of day brim the strong man-child's eyes.
Behold the white
Wide threefold beams that from the hidden sun
Rise swift and far —
One where Orion keeps
His armed watch, and one
That to the midmost starry heaven upleaps ;
The third blots out the firm-fixed Northern Star.

I am the wind that shakes the glittering wave,
Hurries the snowy spume along the shore
And dies at last in some far-murmuring cave.
My voice thou hearest in the breaker's roar —
That sound which never failed since time began,
And first around the world the shining tumult ran.

II

I light the sea and wake the sleeping land.
My footsteps on the hills make music, and my hand
Plays like a harper's on the wind-swept pines.

With the wind and the day
I follow round the world — away! away!
Wide over lake and plain my sunlight shines
And every wave and every blade of grass
Doth know me as I pass;
And me the western sloping mountains know, and me
The far-off, golden sea.

O sea, whereon the passing sun doth lie!
O man, who watchest by that golden sea!
Grieve not, O grieve not thou, but lift thine eye
And see me glorious in the sunset sky!

III

I love not the night
Save when the stars are bright,
Or when the moon
Fills the white air with silence like a tune.
Yea, even the night is mine
When the Northern Lights outshine,
And all the wild heavens throb in ecstasy divine;—
Yea, mine deep midnight, though the black sky lowers,
When the sea burns white and breaks on the shore in
starry showers.

IV

I am the laughter of the new-born child
On whose soft-breathing sleep an angel smiled.
And I all sweet first things that are:
First songs of birds, not perfect as at last,—
Broken and incomplete,—

But sweet, oh, sweet !
And I the first faint glimmer of a star
To the wrecked ship that tells the storm is past ;
The first keen smells and stirrings of the Spring ;
First snowflakes, and first May-flowers after snow ;
The silver glow
Of the new moon's ethereal ring ;
The song the morning stars together made,
And the first kiss of lovers under the first June shade.

v

My sword is quick, my arm is strong to smite
In the dread joy and fury of the fight.
I am with those who win, not those who fly ;
With those who live I am, not those who die.
Who die ? Nay, nay, that word
Where I am is unheard ;
For I am the spirit of youth that cannot change,
Nor cease, nor suffer woe ;
And I am the spirit of beauty that doth range
Through natural forms and motions, and each show
Of outward loveliness. With me have birth
All gentleness and joy in all the earth.
Raphael knew me, and showed the world my face ;
Me Homer knew, and all the singing race —
For I am the spirit of light, and life, and mirth.

A SONG OF EARLY SUMMER

Not yet the orchard lifted
Its cloudy bloom to the sky,
Nor through the twilight drifted
The whippoorwill's low cry ;

The gray rock had not made
Of the vine its glistening kirtle ;
Nor shook in the locust shade
The purple bells of the "myrtle."

Not yet up the chimney-hollow
Was heard in the darkling night
The boom and whir of the swallow
And the twitter that follows the flight ;

Before the foamy whitening
Of the water below the mill ;
Ere yet the summer lightning
Shone red at the edge of the hill ;

In the time of sun and showers,
Of skies half black, half clear ;
'Twixt melting snows and flowers ;
At the poise of the flying year ;

When woods flushed pink and yellow
In dreams of leafy June ;
And days were keen or mellow
Like tones in a changing tune ;

Before the birds had broken
Forth in their song divine,
Oh ! then the word was spoken
That made my darling mine.

A MIDSUMMER SONG

OH, father's gone to market-town, he was up before the
day,
And Jamie's after robins, and the man is making hay,

And whistling down the hollow goes the boy that minds
the mill,

While mother from the kitchen-door is calling with a
will :

“ Polly! — Polly! — The cows are in the corn!
Oh, where 's Polly ? ”

From all the misty morning air there comes a summer
sound —

A murmur as of waters from skies and trees and ground.
The birds they sing upon the wing, the pigeons bill and
coo,

And over hill and hollow rings again the loud halloo :

“ Polly! — Polly! — The cows are in the corn!
Oh, where 's Polly ? ”

Above the trees the honey-bees swarm by with buzz and
boom,

And in the field and garden a thousand blossoms bloom.
Within the farmer's meadow a brown-eyed daisy blows,
And down at the edge of the hollow a red and thorny
rose.

But Polly! — Polly! — The cows are in the corn!
Oh, where 's Polly ?

How strange at such a time of day the mill should stop
its clatter !

The farmer's wife is listening now and wonders what 's
the matter.

Oh, wild the birds are singing in the wood and on the hill,
While whistling up the hollow goes the boy that minds
the mill.

But Polly! — Polly! — The cows are in the corn!
Oh, where 's Polly ?

“ON THE WILD ROSE TREE”

ON the wild rose tree
Many buds there be,
Yet each sunny hour
Hath but one perfect flower.

Thou who wouldst be wise
Open wide thine eyes;
In each sunny hour
Pluck the one perfect flower!

A SONG OF EARLY AUTUMN

WHEN late in summer the streams run yellow,
Burst the bridges and spread into bays;
When berries are black and peaches are mellow,
And hills are hidden by rainy haze;

When the goldenrod is golden still,
But the heart of the sunflower is darker and sadder;
When the corn is in stacks on the slope of the hill,
And slides o'er the path the striped adder.

When butterflies flutter from clover to thicket,
Or wave their wings on the drooping leaf;
When the breeze comes shrill with the call of the cricket,
Grasshoppers' rasp, and rustle of sheaf.

When high in the field the fern-leaves wrinkle,
And brown is the grass where the mowers have mown;
When low in the meadow the cow-bells tinkle,
And small brooks crinkle o'er stock and stone.

When heavy and hollow the robin's whistle
And shadows are deep in the heat of noon ;
When the air is white with the down o' the thistle,
And the sky is red with the harvest moon ;

Oh then be chary, young Robert and Mary,
No time let slip, not a moment wait !
If the fiddle would play it must stop its tuning,
And they who would wed must be done with their
 mooning ;
Let the churn rattle, see well to the cattle,
And pile the wood by the barn-yard gate !

THE BUILDING OF THE CHIMNEY

I

My chimney is builded
On a hill by the sea,
At the edge of a wood
That the sunset has gilded
Since time was begun
And the earth first was done :
For mine and for me
And for you, John Burroughs,
My friend old and good,
At the edge of a wood
On a hill by the sea
My chimney is builded.

II

My chimney gives forth .
All its heat to the north,

While its right arm it reaches
Toward the meadows and beaches,
And its left it extends
To its pine-tree friends.
All its heat to the north
My chimney gives forth.

III

My chimney is builded
Of red and gray granite :
Of great split boulders
Are its thighs and its shoulders ;
Its mouth—try to span it.

'T is a nine-foot block —
The shelf that hangs over
The stout hearth-rock.
Then the lines they upswell
Like a huge church-bell,
Or a bellying sail
In a stiff south gale
When the ship rolls well,
With a blue sky above her.

IV

My chimney — come view it,
And I 'll tell you, John Burroughs,
What is built all through it :
First the derrick's shrill creak,
That perturbed the still air
With a cry of despair.
The lone traveler who passed
At the fall of the night

If he saw not its mast
Stood still with affright
At a sudden strange sound —
Hark ! a woman's wild shriek ?
Or the baying of a hound ?

Then the stone-hammer's clink
And the drill's sharp tinkle,
And bird-songs that sprinkle
Their notes through the wood
(With pine odors scented),
On their swift way to drink
At the spring cold and good
That bubbles 'neath the stone
Where the red chieftain tented
In the days that are gone.

Yes, 'twixt granite and mortar
Many songs, long or shorter,
Are imprisoned in the wall ;
And when red leaves shall fall,—
Coming home, all in herds,
From the air to the earth,—
When I have my heart's desire,
And we sit by the hearth
In the glow of the fire,
You and I, John of Birds,
We shall hear as they call
From the gray granite wall ;
You shall name one and all.

There 's the crow's caw-cawing
From the pine-tree's height,
And the cat-bird's sawing,

The hissing of the adder
That climbed this rocky ladder,
And the song of Bob White ;
The robin's loud clatter,
The chipmunk's chatter,
And the mellow-voiced bell
That the cuckoo strikes well ;
Yes, betwixt the stones and in
There is built a merry din.

But not all bright and gay
Are the songs we shall hear ;
For as day turns to gray
Comes a voice low and clear —
Whippoorwill sounds his wail
Over hill, over dale,
Till the soul fills with fright.
'T is the bird that was heard
On the fields drenched with blood
By the dark southern flood
When they died in the night.

v

But you cannot split granite
Howsoever you may plan it,
Without bringing blood ;
(There 's a drop of mine there
On that block four-square).
Certain oaths, I 'm aware,
Sudden, hot, and not good
(May Heaven cleanse the guilt !)
In these stone walls are built ;—
With the wind through the pine-wood blowing,

The creak of tree on tree,
Child-laughter, and the lowing
Of the homeward-driven cattle,
The sound of wild birds singing,
Of steel on granite ringing,
The memory of battle,
And tales of the roaring sea.

VI

For my chimney was builded
By a Plymouth County sailor,
An old North Sea whaler.
In the warm noon spell
'T was good to hear him tell
Of the great September blow
A dozen years ago :—
How at dawn of the day
The wind began to play,
Till it cut the waves flat
Like the brim of your hat.
There was no sea about,
But it blew straight out
Till the ship lurched over ;
But 't was quick to recover,
When, all of a stroke,
The hurricane it broke.
Great heavens ! how it roared,
And how the rain poured ;
The thirty-fathom chain
Dragged out all in vain.
“ What next ? ” the captain cried
To the mate by his side ;
Then Tip Ryder he replied :

“Fetch the ax — no delay —
Cut the mainmast away;
If you want to save the ship
Let the mainmast rip!”
But another said, “Wait!”
And they did — till too late.
On her beam-ends she blew,
In the sea half the crew —
Struggling back through the wrack,
There to cling day and night.
Not a sail heaves in sight;
And, the worst, one in thirst
(Knows no better, the poor lad!)
Drinks salt water and goes mad.

Eighty hours blown and tossed,
Five good sailors drowned and lost,
And the rest brought to shore;
—Some to sail as before;
“Not Tip Ryder, if he starves
Building chimneys, building wharves.”

VII

Now this was the manner
Of the building of the chimney.
('T is a good old-timer,
As you, friend John, will own.)
Old man Vail cut the stone;
William Ryder was the builder;
Stanford White was the planner;
And the owner and rhymers
Is Richard Watson Gilder.

"A WORD SAID IN THE DARK"

A WORD said in the dark
And hands pressed, for a token;
"Now, little maiden, mark
The word that you have spoken;
Be not your promise broken!"

His lips upon her cheek
Felt tears among their kisses;
"O pardon I bespeak
If for my doubting this is!
Now all my doubting ceases."

A RIDDLE OF LOVERS

OF my fair lady's lovers there were two
Who loved her more than all; nor she, nor they
Guessed which of these loved better, for one way
This had of loving, that another knew.
One round her neck brave arms of empire threw
And covered her with kisses where she lay;
The other sat apart, nor did betray
Sweet sorrow at that sight; but rather drew
His pleasure of his lady through the soul
And sense of this one. So there truly ran
Two separate loves through one embrace; the whole
This lady had of both, when one began
To clasp her close, and win her dear lips' goal.
Now read my lovers' riddle if you can.

BEFORE SUNRISE

THE winds of morning move and sing ;
The western stars are lingering ;
In the pale east one planet still
Shines large above King Philip's hill ; —

And near, in gold against the blue,
The old moon, in its arms the new.
Lo, the deep waters of the bay
Stir with the breath of hurrying day.

Wake, loved one, wake and look with me
Across the narrow, dawn-lit sea!
Such beauty is not wholly mine
Till thou, dear heart, hast made it thine.

“THE WOODS THAT BRING THE SUNSET
NEAR”

THE wind from out the west is blowing ;
The homeward-wandering cows are lowing ;
Dark grow the pine-woods, dark and drear —
The woods that bring the sunset near.

When o'er wide seas the sun declines,
Far off its fading glory shines,—
Far off, sublime, and full of fear,—
The pine-woods bring the sunset near.

This house that looks to east, to west,
This, dear one, is our home, our rest ;
Yonder the stormy sea, and here
The woods that bring the sunset near.

SUNSET FROM THE TRAIN

I

BUT then the sunset smiled,
Smiled once and turned toward dark,
Above the distant, wavering line of trees that filed
Along the horizon's edge ;
Like hooded monks that hark
Through evening air
The call to prayer ; —
Smiled once, and faded slow, slow, slow away ;
When, like a changing dream, the long cloud-wedge,
Brown-gray,
Grew saffron underneath and, ere I knew,
The interspace, green-blue —
The whole, illimitable, western, skyey shore,
The tender, human, silent sunset smiled once more.

II

Thee, absent loved one, did I think on now,
Wondering if thy deep brow
In dreams of me were lifted to the skies,
Where, by our far sea-home, the sunlight dies ;
If thou didst stand alone,
Watching the day pass slowly, slow, as here,
But closer and more dear,
Beyond the meadow and the long, familiar line
Of blackening pine ;
When lo ! that second smile ; — dear heart, it was thine
own.

"AFTER SORROW'S NIGHT"

AFTER sorrow's night
Dawned the morning bright.
In dewy woods I heard
A golden-throated bird,
 And "Love, love, love," it sang,
 And "Love, love, love."

Evening shadows fell
In our happy dell.
From glimmering woods I heard
A golden-throated bird,
 And "Love, love, love," it sang,
 And "Love, love, love."

Oh, the summer night
Starry was and bright.
In the dark woods I heard
A golden-throated bird,
 And "Love, love, love," it sang,
 And "Love, love, love."

A NOVEMBER CHILD

NOVEMBER winds, blow mild
On this new-born child!
Spirit of the autumn wood,
Make her gentle, make her good!
Still attend her,
And befriend her,
Fill her days with warmth and color;
Keep her safe from winter's dolor.

On thy bosom
Hide this blossom
Safe from summer's rain and thunder !
When those eyes of light and wonder
Tire at last of earthly places —
Full of years and full of graces,
Then, O then
Take her back to heaven again !

AT NIGHT

THE sky is dark, and dark the bay below
Save where the midnight city's pallid glow
Lies like a lily white
On the black pool of night.

O rushing steamer, hurry on thy way
Across the swirling Kills and gusty bay,
To where the eddying tide
Strikes hard the city's side !

For there, between the river and the sea,
Beneath that glow,— the lily's heart to me,—
A sleeping mother mild,
And by her breast a child !

CRADLE SONG

In the embers shining bright
A garden grows for thy delight,
With roses yellow, red, and white.
But, O my child, beware, beware!
Touch not the blossoms blowing there,
For every rose a thorn doth bear.

“NINE YEARS”

NINE years to heaven had flown,
And June came, with June's token —
The wild rose that had known
A maiden's silence broken.

'T was thus the lover spoke,
And thus she leaned and listened:
(Below, the billows broke,
The blue sea shook and glistened,)

“We have been happy, Love,
Through bright and stormy weather,
Happy all hope above,
For we have been together.

“To meet, to love, to wed,—
Joy without stint or measure,—
This was our lot,” he said,
“To find untouched our treasure;

“But had some blindfold fate
Bound each unto another —
To turn from Heaven's gate,
Each heart-throb hide and smother!

“O dear and faithful heart
If thus had we been fated;
To meet, to know, to part —
Too early, falsely, mated!

“Were this our bitter plight,
Ah, could we have dissembled?”
Her cheek turned pale with fright;
She hid her face, and trembled.

“BACK FROM THE DARKNESS TO THE
LIGHT AGAIN”

“BACK from the darkness to the light again!”—
Not from the darkness, Love, for hadst thou lain
Within the shadowy portal of the tomb,
Thy light had warmed the darkness into bloom.

PART II

FATE

I FLUNG a stone into a grassy field;—
How many tiny creatures there may yield
(I thought) their petty lives through that rude shock!
To me a pebble, 't is to them a rock—
Gigantic, cruel, fraught with sudden death.
Perhaps it crushed an ant, perhaps its breath
Alone tore down a white and glittering palace,
And the small spider damns the giant's malice
Who wrought the wreck—blasted his pretty art!

Who knows what day some saunterer, light of heart,
An idle wanderer through the fields of space,
Large-limbed, big-brained, to whom our puny race
Seems small as insects,—one whose footstep jars
On some vast world-orb islanded by stars,—
May fling a stone and crush our earth to bits,
And all that men have builded by their wits?

“Ah, what a loss!” you say; “our bodies go,
But not our temples, statues, and the glow
Of glorious canvases; and not the pages
Our poets have illumed through myriad ages.

What boots the insect's loss? Another day
Will see the selfsame ant-hill and the play
Of light on dainty web the same. But blot
All human art from this terrestrial plot,
Something indeed would pass that nevermore
Would light the universe as once before!"

The spider's work is not original,—
You hold,—but what of ours? I fear that all
We do is just the same thing over and over.
Take Life: you have the woman and her lover;
'T is old as Eden; nought is new in that!
Take Building, and you reach ere long the flat
Nile desert sands, by way of France, Rome, Greece.
And there is poetry—our bards increase
In numbers, not in sweetness, not in force,
Since he, sublimest poet of this globe,
Forgotten now, poured forth the chant of Job—
Where Man with the Eternal holds discourse.
No, no! The forms may change, but even they
Come round again. Could we but truly scan it,
We 'd find in the heavens some little, busy planet,
Whence all we are was borrowed. If to-day
The imagined giant flung his ponderous stone,
And we and all our far-stretched schemes were done,
His were a scant remorse and short-lived trouble,—
Like mine for those small creatures in the stubble.

"WE MET UPON THE CROWDED WAY"

I

WE met upon the crowded way;
We spoke and passed. How bright the day

Turned from that moment, for a light
Did shine from her to make it bright!
And then I asked: Can such as she
From life be blotted utterly?
The thoughts from those clear eyes that dawn—
Down to the ground can they be drawn?

II

Among the mighty who can find
One that hath a perfect mind?
Angry, jealous, cursed by feuds,
They own the sway of fatal moods;
But thou dost perfect seem to me
In thy divine simplicity.
Though from the heavens the stars be wrenched,
Thy light, dear maid, shall not be quenched.
Gentle, and true, and pure, and free—
The gods will not abandon thee!

THE WHITE AND THE RED ROSE

I

IN Heaven's happy bowers
There blossom two flowers,
One with fiery glow
And one as white as snow;
While lo! before them stands,
With pale and trembling hands,
A spirit who must choose—
One, and one refuse.

II

Oh, tell me of these flowers
That bloom in heavenly bowers,
One with fiery glow,
And one as white as snow !
And tell me who is this
In Heaven's holy bliss
Who trembles and who cries
Like a mortal soul that dies !

III

These blossoms two
Wet with heavenly dew—
The Gentle Heart is one,
And one is Beauty's own ;
And the spirit here that stands,
With pale and trembling hands,
Before to-morrow's morn
Will be a child new-born,
Will be a mortal maiden
With earthly sorrows laden ;
But of these shining flowers
That bloom in heavenly bowers,
To-day she still may choose
One, and one refuse.

IV

Will she pluck the crimson flower
And win Beauty's dower ?
Will she choose the better part
And gain the Gentle Heart ?

Awhile she weeping waits
Within those pearly gates;
Alas! the mortal maiden
With earthly sorrow laden;
Her tears afresh they start —
She has chosen the Gentle Heart.

V

And now the spirit goes,
In her breast the snow-white rose.
When hark! a voice that calls
Within the garden walls:
“Thou didst choose the better part,
Thou hast won the Gentle Heart —
Lo, now to thee is given
The red rose of Heaven.”

A WOMAN'S THOUGHT

I AM a woman — therefore I may not
Call to him, cry to him,
Fly to him,
Bid him delay not!

Then when he comes to me, I must sit quiet;
Still as a stone —
All silent and cold.
If my heart riot —
Crush and defy it!
Should I grow bold,
Say one dear thing to him,
All my life fling to him,
Cling to him —

FIVE BOOKS OF SONG

What to atone
Is enough for my sinning!
This were the cost to me,
This were my winning—
That he were lost to me.

Not as a lover
At last if he part from me,
Tearing my heart from me,
Hurt beyond cure —
Calm and demure
Then must I hold me,
In myself fold me,
Lest he discover;
Showing no sign to him
By look of mine to him
What he has been to me —
How my heart turns to him,
Follows him, yearns to him,
Prays him to love me.

Pity me, lean to me,
Thou God above me!

THE RIVER INN

THE night was black and drear
Of the last day of the year.
Two guests to the river inn
Came, from the wide world's bound —
One with clangor and din,
The other without a sound.

“ Now hurry, servants and host !
Get the best that your cellars boast.
White be the sheets and fine,
And the fire on the hearthstone bright ;
Pile the wood, and spare not the wine,
And call him at morning-light.”

“ But where is the silent guest ?
In what chamber shall she rest ?
In this ! Should she not go higher ?
'T is damp, and the fire is gone.”

“ You need not kindle the fire,
You need not call her at dawn.”

Next morn he sallied forth
On his journey to the North.
Oh, bright the sunlight shone
Through boughs that the breezes stir ;
But for her was lifted a stone
Under the churchyard fir.

THE HOMESTEAD

I

HERE stays the house, here stay the selfsame places,
Here the white lilacs and the buttonwoods ;
Here are the pine-groves, there the river-floods,
And there the threading brook that interlaces
Green meadow-bank with meadow-bank the same.
The melancholy nightly chorus came
Long, long ago from the same pool, and yonder

Stark poplars lift in the same twilight air
Their ancient shadows; nearer still, and fonder,
The black-heart cherry-tree's gaunt branches bare
Rasp on the same old window where I ponder.

II

And we, the only living, only pass;
We come and go, whither and whence we know not.
From birth to bound the same house keeps, alas!
New lives as gently as the old; there show not
Among the haunts that each had thought his own
The looks that partings bring to human faces.
The black-heart there, that heard my earliest moan,
And yet shall hear my last, like all these places
I love so well, unloving lives from child
To child; from morning joy to evening sorrow —
Untouched by joy, by anguish undefiled;
All one the generations gone, and new;
All one dark yesterday and bright to-morrow;
To the old tree's insensate sympathy
All one the morning and the evening dew —
My far, forgotten ancestor and I.

AT FOUR SCORE

THIS is the house she was born in, full four score years
ago,
And here she is living still, bowed and ailing, but clinging
Still to this wonted life — like an ancient and blasted
oak-tree,
Whose dying roots yet clasp the earth with an iron hold.

This is the house she was born in, and yonder across the
bay
Is the home her lover built, for her and for him and
their children;
Daily she watched it grow, from dawn to the evening
twilight,
As it rose on the orchard hill, 'mid the springtime
showers and bloom.

There is the village church, its steeple over the trees
Rises and shows the clock she has watched since the
day it was started —
Oh, many a year ago, how many she cannot remember.
Now solemnly over the water rings out the evening hour.

And there in that very church,—though, alas, how be-
dizened, and changed!
They 've painted it up, she says, in their queer, new,
modern fashion,—
There on a morning in June, she gave her hand to her
husband;
Her heart it was his (she told him) long years and years
before.

Now here she sits at the window, gazing out on steeple
and hill;
All but the houses are gone,—the church, and the trees,
and the houses;—
All, all have gone long since, parents, and husband, and
children;
And herself—she thinks, at times, she too has vanished
and gone.

No, it cannot be she who stood in the church that
morning in June,
Nor she who felt at her breast the lips of a child in the
darkness;
But hark in the gathering dusk comes a low, quick moan
of anguish —
Ah, it is she indeed, who has lived, who has loved, and
lost.

For she thinks of a wintry night, when her last was taken
away,
Forty years this very month, the last, the fairest, the
dearest;
All gone — ah, yes, it is she who has loved, who has
lost, and suffered,
She and none other it is, left alone in her sorrow and pain.
Still with its sapless roots, that stay though the branches
have dropped —
Have withered, and fallen, and gone, their strength and
their glory forgotten;
Still with the life that remains, silent, and faithful, and
steadfast,
Through sunshine and bending storm clings the oak to
its mother-earth.

JOHN CARMAN

I

JOHN CARMAN of Carmeltown
Worked hard through the livelong day;
He drove his awl and he snapped his thread
And he had but little to say.

He had but little to say
Except to a neighbor's child ;
Three summers old she was, and her eyes
Had a look that was deep and wild.

Her hair was heavy and brown
Like clouds in a starry night.
She came and sat by the cobbler's bench
And his soul was filled with delight.

No kith nor kin had he
And he never went gadding about ;
A strange, shy man, the people said ;
They could not make him out.

And some of them shook their heads
And would never tell what they 'd heard.
But he drove his awl and snapped his thread —
And he always kept his word ;

And the little child that knew him
Better than all the rest,
She threw her arms around his neck
And went to sleep on his breast.

One day in that dreadful summer
When children died by the score,
John Carman glanced from his work and saw
Her mother there at the door.

He knew by the look on her face —
And his own turned deathly white ;
He rose from his bench and followed her out
And watched by the child that night.

He tended her day and night ;
He watched by her night and day.
He saw the cruel pain in her eyes ;
He saw her lips turn gray.

II

The day that the child was buried
John Carman went back to his last,
And the neighbors said that for weeks and weeks
Not a word his clenched lips passed.

“ He takes it hard,” they gossiped,
“ Poor man, he ’s lacking in wit ” ;
“ I ’ll drop in to-day,” said Deacon Gray,
“ And comfort him up a bit.”

So Deacon Gray dropped in
With a kind and neighborly air,
And before he left he knelt on the floor
And wrestled with God in prayer.

And he said : “ O Lord, thou hast stricken
This soul in its babyhood ;
In Thy own way, we beseech and pray,
Bring forth from evil good.”

III

That night the fire-bells rang
And the flames shot up to the sky,
And into the street as pale as a sheet
The town-folk flock and cry.

The bells ring loud and long,
 The flames leap high and higher,
 The rattling engines come too late —
 The old First Church is on fire !

And lo and behold in the crimson glare
 They see John Carman stand —
 A look of mirth on his iron lips
 And a blazing torch in his hand.

“ You say it was *He* who killed her ”
 (His voice had a fearful sound):
 “ I ’d have you know, who love him so,
 I ’ve burned his house to the ground.”

.

John Carman died in prison,
 In the madman’s cell, they say;
 And from his crime, that I ’ve told in rhyme,
 Heaven cleanse his soul, I pray.

DRINKING SONG

I

THOU who lov’st and art forsaken,
 Didst believe, and wert mistaken,
 From thy dream thou wilt not waken
 When Death thee shall call.
 Like are infidel, believer,—
 The deceived, and the deceiver,
 When the grave hides all.

II

What if thou be saint or sinner,
Crooked graybeard, straight beginner,
With empty paunch, or jolly dinner,

When Death thee shall call.

All alike are rich and richer,
King with crown, and cross-legged stitcher,

When the grave hides all.

III

Hope not thou to live hereafter
In men's memories and laughter,
When, 'twixt hearth and ringing rafter,

Death thee shall call.

For we both shall be forgotten,
Friend, when thou and I are rotten

And the grave hides all.

THE VOYAGER

I

"FRIEND, why goest thou forth
When ice-hills drift from the north
And crush together?"

"The Voice that me doth call
Heeds not the ice-hill's fall,
Nor wind, nor weather."

II

"But, friend, the night is black;
Behold the driving wrack
And wild seas under!"

“My straight and narrow bark
Fears not the threatening dark,
Nor storm, nor thunder.”

III

“But oh, thy children dear!
Thy wife—she is not here,
I haste to bring her!”

“No, no, it is too late!
Hush, hush! I may not wait,
Nor weep, nor linger.”

IV

“Hark! Who is he that knocks
With slow and dreadful shocks
The walls to sever?”

“It is my Master’s call,
I go, whate’er befall;
Farewell forever.”

A LAMENT

FOR THE DEAD OF THE “JEANNETTE” BROUGHT
HOME ON THE “FRISIA”

I

O GATES of ice! long have ye held our loved ones.
Ye Cruel! how could ye keep from us them for whom
our hearts yearned—our dear ones, our fathers, our chil-
dren, our brothers, our lovers.

Cold and Sleet, Darkness and Ice ! hard have ye held them ; ye would not let them go.

Their hands ye have bound fast ; their feet ye have detained ; and well have ye laid hold upon the hearts of our loved ones.

O silent Arctic Night ! thou hast wooed them from us.

O secret of the white and unknown world ! too strong hast thou been for us ; we were as nothing to thee ; thou hast drawn them from us ; thou wouldst not let them go.

The long day passed ; thou wouldst not let them go.

The long, long night came and went ; thou wouldst not let them go.

O thou insatiate ! What to thee are youth, and life, and hope, and love ?

For thou art Death, not Life ; thou art Despair, not Hope.

Nought to thee the rush of youthful blood ; nought to thee the beauty and strength of our loved ones.

The breath of their bodies was not sweet to thee ; they loved thee, and thou lovedst not them.

They followed thee, thou didst not look upon them ; but still, O thou inviolate ! still did they follow thee.

Thee did they follow through storm, through perils of the ice, and of the unknown darkness.

The sharp spears of the frost they feared not ; the terrors of death they feared not. For thee, for thee, for thee, not for us ; only that they might look upon thy face !

All these they endured for thee ; the thought of us whom yet they loved, this also they endured for thee.

For thou art beautiful, beyond the beauty of woman. In thy hair are the stars of night. Thou wrappest about thee garments of fire that burn not, and are never quenched ;

When thou movest they are moved; when thou breathest they tremble.

Yea, awful art thou in thy beauty; with white fingers beckoning in mists and shadows of the frozen sea; drawing to thee the hearts of heroes.

II

Long, long have they tarried in thy gates, O North!
But now thou hast given them up. Lo, they come to us once more—our beloved, our only ones!

O dearest, why have ye stayed so long?

With ye, night and day have come and gone, but with us there was night only.

But no, we will not reproach ye, hearts of our hearts, dearest and best; our fathers, our children, our brothers, our lovers!

Come back to us! Behold our arms are open for you; ye are ours; ye have returned unto us; ye shall never go hence again.

But why are ye silent, why do ye not stir, why do ye not speak to us, O beloved ones?

White are your cheeks like snow; your eyes they do not look upon us.

So long ye have been gone, and is this your joy to see us once more?

Lo! do we not welcome ye? Are not our souls glad? Do not our tears, long kept, fall upon your faces?

Or do ye but sleep well, after those hard and weary labors? O now awaken, for ye shall take rest and pleasure; here are your homes and kindred!

Listen, beloved: here is your sister, here is your brother, here is your lover!

III

They will not hearken to our voices.

They are still ; their eyes look not upon us.

O insatiate ! O Secret of the white and unknown world, cruel indeed thou art !

Thou hast sent back to us our best beloved ; their bodies thou hast rendered up, but their spirits thou hast taken away from us forever.

In life thou didst hold them from us — and in death, in death they are thine.

NEW YORK, February 20, 1884.

ILL TIDINGS

(THE STUDIO CONCERT)

IN the long studio from whose towering walls

Greek Pheidias beams, and Angelo appalls,

Eager the listening, downcast faces throng

While violins their piercing tones prolong.

At times I know not if I see, or hear,

Yon statue's smile, or some not sorrowing tear

Down-falling on the surface of the stream

That music pours across my waking dream.

Ah, is it then a dream that while repeat

Those chords, like strokes of silver-shod light feet,

And the great Master's music marches on —

I hear the horses of the Parthenon ?

.

But all to-day seems vague, unreal, far,

With fear and discord in the dearest strain,

For 'neath yon slowly-sinking western star

One that I love lies on her bed of pain.

A NEW WORLD

“I KNOW,” he said,
“The thunder and the lightning have passed by
And all the earth is black, and burnt, and dead;
But, friend, the grass will grow again, the flowers
Again will bloom, the summer birds will sing,
And the all-healing sun will shine once more.”

“Blind prophecy,” she answered in her woe.
Yet still, as time wore on, the prophet’s words
Came true,—but not all true. (So shall it be
With all who here may suffer mortal loss.)
Ere long the grass, the flowers, the birds, the sun
Once more made bright the bleak and desolate earth;
They came once more, those joys of other days;
She felt them, moved among them, and was glad.

Glad—glad! O mocking word! They came once
more,
But not the same to her. Familiar they
As a remembered dream, and beautiful—
But changed, all changed, the whole world changed
forever.

PART III

CONGRESS: 1878

’T WAS in the year when mutterings, loud and deep,
Were heard in all the dark, distracted land,
And grave men questioned: “Can the state withstand
The shock and strain to come? Oh, will she keep
Firm her four walls, should the wild creature leap

To ruin and ravish? Will her pillars planned
By the great dead, tremble to either hand?
The dead! would heaven they might awake from
sleep!"

Haply (I thought) our Congress still may hold
One voice of power — when lo! upon the blast
A sound like jackals ravening to and fro.
Great God! And has it come to this at last?
Such noise, such shame, where once, not long ago,
The pure and wise their living thoughts outrolled.

REFORM

I

OH, how shall I help to right the world that is going
wrong!
And what can I do to hurry the promised time of peace!
The day of work is short and the night of sleep is long;
And whether to pray or preach, or whether to sing a
song,
To plow in my neighbor's field, or to seek the golden
fleece,
Or to sit with my hands in my lap, and wish that ill
would cease!

II

I think, sometimes, it were best just to let the Lord alone;
I am sure some people forget He was here before they
came;
Though they say it is all for His glory, 't is a good deal
more for their own,
That they peddle their petty schemes, and blate and
babble and groan.

I sometimes think it were best, and a man were little to
blame,
Should he pass on his silent way nor mix with the noisy
shame.

MEMORIAL DAY

I

SHE saw the bayonets flashing in the sun,
The flags that proudly waved; she heard the bugles
calling;
She saw the tattered banners falling
About the broken staffs, as one by one
The remnant of the mighty army passed;
And at the last
Flowers for the graves of those whose fight was done.

II

She heard the tramping of ten thousand feet
As the long line swept round the crowded square;
She heard the incessant hum
That filled the warm and blossom-scented air —
The shrilling fife, the roll and throb of drum,
The happy laugh, the cheer. Oh glorious and meet
To honor thus the dead,
Who chose the better part,
Who for their country bled!
— The dead! Great God! she stood there in the street,
Living, yet dead in soul and mind and heart —
While far away
His grave was decked with flowers by strangers' hands
to-day.

NORTH TO THE SOUTH

LAND of the South, whose stricken heart and brow
Bring grief to eyes that erewhile only knew
For their own loss to sorrow,—spurn not thou
These tribute tears,—ah, we have suffered too.
NEW ORLEANS, 1885.

THE BURIAL OF GRANT

(NEW YORK, AUGUST 8, 1885)

I

YE living soldiers of the mighty war,
Once more from roaring cannon and the drums
And bugles blown at morn, the summons comes;
Forget the halting limb, each wound and scar;
Once more your Captain calls to you;
Come to his last review!

II

And come ye, too, bright spirits of the dead,
Ye who flamed heavenward from the embattled field;
And ye whose harder fate it was to yield
Life from the loathful prison or anguished bed;
Dear ghosts! come join your comrades here
Beside this sacred bier.

III

Nor be ye absent, ye immortal band,—
Warriors of ages past, and our own age,—
Who drew the sword for right, and not in rage,

Made war that peace might live in all the land,
Nor ever struck one vengeful blow,
But helped the fallen foe.

IV

And fail not ye,—but, ah, ye falter not
To join his army of the dead and living,—
Ye who once felt his might, and his forgiving;
Brothers, whom more in love than hate he smote.
For all his countrymen make room
By our great hero's tomb!

V

Come soldiers — not to battle as of yore,
But come to weep; ay, shed your noblest tears;
For lo, the stubborn chief, who knew not fears,
Lies cold at last, ye shall not see him more.
How long grim Death he fought and well,
That poor, lean frame doth tell.

VI

All's over now; here let our Captain rest,
Silent amid the blare of praise and blame;
Here let him rest, while never rests his fame;
Here in the city's heart he loved the best,
And where our sons his tomb may see
To make them brave as he;—

VII

As brave as he—he on whose iron arm
Our Greatest leaned, our gentlest and most wise;
Leaned when all other help seemed mocking lies,

While this one soldier checked the tide of harm,
And they together saved the state,
And made it free and great.

THE DEAD COMRADE

At the burial of Grant, a bugler stood forth and sounded "taps."

I

COME, soldiers, arouse ye!
Another has gone;
Let us bury our comrade,
His battles are done.

His sun it is set;
He was true, he was brave,
He feared not the grave,
There is nought to regret.

II

Bring music and banners
And wreaths for his bier —
No fault of the fighter
That Death conquered here.

Bring him home ne'er to rove,
Bear him home to his rest,
And over his breast
Fold the flag of his love.

III

Great Captain of battles,
We leave him with thee!
What was wrong, O forgive it;
His spirit make free.

Sound taps, and away !
Out lights, and to bed !
Farewell, soldier dead !
Farewell — for a day.

ON THE LIFE-MASK OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

THIS bronze doth keep the very form and mold
Of our great martyr's face. Yes, this is he:
That brow all wisdom, all benignity;
That human, humorous mouth; those cheeks that
hold
Like some harsh landscape all the summer's gold;
That spirit fit for sorrow, as the sea
For storms to beat on; the lone agony
Those silent, patient lips too well foretold.
Yes, this is he who ruled a world of men
As might some prophet of the elder day —
Brooding above the tempest and the fray
With deep-eyed thought and more than mortal ken.
A power was his beyond the touch of art
Or armed strength — his pure and mighty heart.

THE PRESIDENT

Nor his to guide the ship while tempests blow,
War's billows burst, and glorious thunders beat;
Not his the joy to see an alien foe
Fly down the dreadful valley of defeat;

Not his the fame of that great soul and tried,
 Who conquered civil peace by arms and love ;
 Nor his the emprise of one who lately died
 Hand-clasped with foes, who weep his tomb above.
 But this his task,— all passionless, unsplendid,—
 To teach, in public place, a nobler creed ;
 To build a wall,— alone or well befriended,—
 'Gainst the base partizan's ignoble greed.
 Or will he fail, or triumph ? History lays
 A moment down her pen. A nation waits — and
 prays.

PART IV

ESSIPOFF

WHAT is her playing like ?
 I ask — while dreaming here under her music's
 power.
 'T is like the leaves of the dark passion-flower
 Which grows on a strong vine whose roots, oh deep
 they sink,
 Deep in the ground, that flower's pure life to drink.

II

What is her playing like ?
 'T is like a bird
 Who, singing in a wild wood, never knows
 That its lone melody is heard
 By wandering mortal, who forgets his heavy woes.

ADELE AUS DER OHE

(LISZT)

I

WHAT is her playing like?
'T is like the wind in wintry northern valleys.
A dream-pause; — then it rallies
And once more bends the pine-tops, shatters
The ice-crag, whitely scatters
The spray along the paths of avalanches,
Startles the blood, and every visage blanches.

II

Half-sleeps the wind above a swirling pool
That holds the trembling shadow of the trees;
Where waves too wildly rush to freeze
Though all the air is cool;
And hear, oh hear, while musically call
With nearer tinkling sounds, or distant roar,
Voices of fall on fall;
And now a swelling blast, that dies; and now—no
more, no more.

(CHOPIN)

I

AH, what celestial art!
And can sweet thoughts become pure tone and float,
All music, into the tranced mind and heart!
Her hand scarce stirs the singing, wiry metal—
Hear from the wild-rose fall each perfect petal!

II

And can we have, on earth, of heaven the whole !
Heard thoughts—the soul of inexpressible thought ;
Roses of sound
That strew melodious leaves upon the silent ground ;
And music that is music's very soul,
Without one touch of earth,—
Too tender, even, for sorrow, and too bright for mirth !

MODJESKA

THERE are four sisters known to mortals well,
Whose names are Joy and Sorrow, Death and Love ;
This last it was who did my footsteps move
To where the other deep-eyed sisters dwell.
To-night, or ere yon painted curtain fell,
These, one by one, before my eyes did rove
Through the brave mimic world that Shakespeare wove.
Lady ! thy art, thy passion were the spell
That held me, and still holds ; for thou dost show,
With those most high each in his sovereign art,—
Shakespeare supreme, and Tuscan Angelo,—
Great art and passion are one. Thine too the part
To prove, that still for him the laurels grow
Who reaches through the mind to pluck the heart.

FOR AN ALBUM

(TO BE READ ONE HUNDRED YEARS AFTER)

A CENTURY'S summer breezes shook
The maple shadows on the grass
Since she who owned this ancient book
From the green world to heaven did pass.

Beside a northern lake she grew,
A wild-flower on its craggy walls;
Her eyes were mingled gray and blue,
Like waves where summer sunlight falls.

Cheerful from morn to evening-close,
No humblest work, no prayer forgot!
Yet who of woman born but knows
The sorrows of our mortal lot!

And she too suffered, though the wound
Was hidden from the general gaze,
And most from those who thus had found
An added burden for their days.

She had no special grace, nor art;
Her riches not in banks were kept;
Her treasure was a gentle heart;
Her skill to comfort those who wept.

Not without foes her days were passed,
For quick her burning scorn was fanned.
Her friends were many — least and last,
A poet from a distant land.

PORTO FINO

I KNOW a girl — she is a poet's daughter,
And many-mooded as a poet's day,
And changing as the Mediterranean water;
We walked together by an emerald bay,

So deep, so green, so promontory-hidden
That the lost mariner might peer in vain
Through storms, to find where he erewhile had ridden,
Safe-sheltered from the wild and windy main.

Down the high stairs we clambered just to rest a
Cool moment in the church's antique shade.
How gay the aisles and altars! 'T was the festa
Of brave Saint George who the old dragon laid.

How bright the little port! The red flags fluttered,
Loud clanged the bells, and loud the children's glee;
What though some distant, unseen storm-cloud muttered,
And waves breathed big along the weedy quay.

We climbed the hill whose rising cleaves asunder
Green bay and blue immeasurable sea;
We heard the breakers at its bases thunder;
We heard the priests' harsh chant soar wild and free.

Then through the graveyard's straight and narrow portal
Our journey led. How dark the place! How strange
Its steep, black mountain wall — as if the immortal
Spirit could thus be stayed its skyward range!

Beyond, the smoky olives clothed the mountains
In green that grew through many a moon-lit night.
Below, down cleft and chasm leaped snowy fountains;
Above, the sky was warm, and blue, and bright;

When, sudden, from out a fair and smiling heaven
Burst forth the rain, quick as a trumpet-blare;
Yet still the Italian sun each drop did leaven,
And turned the rain to diamonds in the air.

So passed the day in shade, and shower, and sun,
Like thine own moods, thou sweet and changeful
maiden!

Great Heaven! deal kindly with this gentle one,
Nor let her soul too heavily be laden.

TO F. F. C.

(ON THE PANSY, HER CLASS FLOWER)

THIS is the flower of thought ;
 Take it, thou empress of a land
 Of true hearts, from a loyal subject's hand ;
 And with it nought,
 O nought beneath life's ever-brightening dome
 Of sad remembrance ! May it bring
 Dreams of joy only, and of happy days
 Backward and still to come ; —
 Of birds that sang last eve, and still shall sing
 In dawns of morrows only joyful lays.
 Or yet, if thou shouldst go
 Not utterly unscathed of mortal woe —
 Thy blackest hour be touched by memory's gold,
 As is this flower's leaf. Then shalt thou hold
 Ever a young heart in thee, ever as now
 A look of quenchless youth beneath thy peerless brow.

IMPROMPTUS

I. ART

FOLLOWING the sun, westward the march of power !
 The Rose of Might blooms in our new-world mart :
 But see, just bursting forth from bud to flower, —
 A late, slow growth, — the fairer Rose of Art.

II. TO A SOUTHERN GIRL

SWEET rose that bloomed on the red field of war,
 Think not too sadly of the dreadful Past !
 Are not old foes new friends — not least, though last,
 One whose far home lies 'neath yon Northern star ?

III. FOR A FAN

EACH of us answers to a call;
Master or mistress have we all.
I belong to lovely Anne;
Dost thou not wish *thou* wert a fan?
Thus to be treasured, thus to be prest,
Pleasuring thus, and thus caressed?

PART V

MUSIC AND WORDS

I

THIS day I heard such music that I thought:
Hath human speech the power thus to be wrought,
Into such melody,—pure, sensuous sound,—
Into such mellow, murmuring mazes caught;
Can words (I said), when these keen tones are bound,—
(Silent, except in memory of this hour) —
Can human words alone usurp the power
Of trembling strings that thrill to the very soul,
And of this ecstasy bring back the whole?

II

Ah no, ('t was answer'd in my inmost heart,)
Unto itself sufficient is each art,
And each doth utter what none other can —
Some hidden mood of the large soul of man.
Ah, think not thou with words well interweaved
To wake the tones wherein the viol grieved
With its most heavy burden; think not thou,
Adventurous, to push thy shallop's prow

Into that surge of well-remembered tones,
Striving to match each wandering wind that moans,
Each bell that tolls, and every bugle's blowing
With some most fitting word, some verse bestowing
A never-shifting form on that which passed
Swift as a bird that glimmers down the blast.

III

So, still unworded, save in memory mute,
Rest thou sweet hour of viol and of lute ;
Of thoughts that never, never can be spoken,
Too frail for the rough usage of men's words —
Thoughts that shall keep their silence all unbroken
Till music once more stirs them ;—then like birds
That in the night-time slumber, they shall wake,
While all the leaves of all the forest shake.
Oh, hark, I hear it now, that tender strain
Fulfilled with all of sorrow save its pain.

THE POET'S FAME

MANY the songs of power the poet wrought
To shake the hearts of men. Yea, he had caught
The inarticulate and murmuring sound
That comes at midnight from the darkened ground
When the earth sleeps ; for this he framed a word
Of human speech, and hearts were strangely stirred
That listened. And for him the evening dew
Fell with a sound of music, and the blue
Of the deep, starry sky he had the art
To put in language that did seem a part
Of the great scope and progeny of nature.
In woods, or waves, or winds, there was no creature

Mysterious to him. He was too wise
Either to fear, or follow, or despise
Whom men call Science—for he knew full well
All she had told, or still might live to tell,
Was known to him before her very birth;
Yea, that there was no secret of the earth,
Nor of the waters under, nor the skies,
That had been hidden from the poet's eyes;
By him there was no ocean unexplored,
Nor any savage coast that had not roared
Its music in his ears.

He loved the town —
Not less he loved the ever-deepening brown
Of summer twilights on the enchanted hills;
Where he might listen to the starts and thrills
Of birds that sang and rustled in the trees,
Or watch the footsteps of the wandering breeze
And the birds' shadows as they fluttered by
Or slowly wheeled across the unclouded sky.

All these were written on the poet's soul;
But he knew, too, the utmost, distant goal
Of the human mind. His fiery thought did run
To Time's beginning, ere yon central sun
Had warmed to life the swarming broods of men.
In waking dreams, his many-visioned ken
Clutched the large, final destiny of things.
He heard the starry music, and the wings
Of beings unfelt by others thrilled the air
About him. Yet the loud and angry blare
Of tempests found an echo in his verse,
And it was here that lovers did rehearse
The ditties they would sing when, not too soon,
Came the warm night;— shadows, and stars, and moon.

Who heard his songs were filled with noble rage,
And wars took fire from his prophetic page —
Most righteous wars, wherein, 'midst blood and tears,
The world rushed onward through a thousand years.
And still he made the gentle sounds of peace
Heroic; bade the nation's anger cease!
Bitter his songs of grief for those who fell —
And for all this the people loved him well.

They loved him well and therefore, on a day,
They said with one accord: "Behold how gray
Our poet's head hath grown! Ere 't is too late
Come, let us crown him in our Hall of State;
Ring loud the bells, give to the winds his praise,
And urge his fame to other lands and days!"

So was it done, and deep his joy therein.
But passing home at night, from out the din
Of the loud Hall, the poet, unaware,
Moved through a lonely and dim-lighted square —
There was the smell of lilacs in the air
And then the sudden singing of a bird,
Startled by his slow tread. What memory stirred
Within his brain he told not. Yet this night,—
Lone lingering when the eastern heavens were bright,—
He wove a song of such immortal art
That there lives not in all the world one heart —
One human heart unmoved by it. Long! long!
The laurel-crown has failed, but not that song
Born of the night and sorrow. Where he lies
At rest beneath the ever-shifting skies,
Age after age, from far-off lands they come,
With tears and flowers, to seek the poet's tomb.

THE POET'S PROTEST

I

O MAN with your rule and measure,
Your tests and analyses !
You may take your empty pleasure,
May kill the pine, if you please ;
You may count the rings and the seasons,
May hold the sap to the sun,
You may guess at the ways and the reasons
Till your little day is done.

II

But for me the golden crest
That shakes in the wind and launches
Its spear toward the reddening West !
For me the bough and the breeze,
The sap unseen, and the glint
Of light on the dew-wet branches,—
The hiding shadows, the hint
Of the soul of mysteries.

III

You may sound the sources of life,
And prate of its aim and scope ;
You may search with your chilly knife
Through the broken heart of hope.
But for me the love-sweet breath,
And the warm, white bosom heaving,
And never a thought of death,
And only the bliss of living.

TO A YOUNG POET

I

IN the morning of the skies
I heard a lark arise.
On the first day of the year
A wood-flower did appear.

II

Like a violet, like a lark,
Like the dawn that kills the dark,
Like a dewdrop, trembling, clinging,
Is the poet's first sweet singing.

"WHEN THE TRUE POET COMES"

I

"WHEN the true poet comes, how shall we know him?
By what clear token; manners, language, dress?
Or will a voice from heaven speak and show him —
Him the swift healer of the earth's distress?
Tell us, that when the long-expected comes
At last, with mirth and melody and singing,
We him may greet with banners, beat of drums,
Welcome of men and maids and joybells ringing;
And, for this poet of ours,
Laurels and flowers."

II

Thus shall ye know him, this shall be his token —
Manners like other men, an unstrange gear;
His speech not musical, but harsh and broken
Will sound at first, each line a driven spear.

For he will sing as in the centuries olden,
Before mankind its earliest fire forgot —
Yet whoso listens long hears music golden.
How shall ye know him? Ye shall know him not
Till, ended hate and scorn,
To the grave he 's borne.

YOUTH AND AGE

I

"I LIKE your book, my boy,
'T is full of youth and joy,
And love that sings and dreams.
Yet it puzzles me," he said;
"A string of pearls it seems,
But I cannot find the thread."

II

"O friend of olden days!
Dear to me is your praise,
But, many and many a year
You must go back, I fear;
You must journey back," I said,
"To find that golden thread!"

THE SONNET

WHAT is a sonnet? 'T is the pearly shell
That murmurs of the far-off murmuring sea;
A precious jewel carved most curiously;
It is a little picture painted well.
What is a sonnet? 'T is the tear that fell
From a great poet's hidden ecstasy;
A two-edged sword, a star, a song — ah me!
Sometimes a heavy-tolling funeral bell.

This was the flame that shook with Dante's breath;
The solemn organ whereon Milton played,
And the clear glass where Shakespeare's shadow falls:
A sea this is — beware who ventureth!
For like a fiord the narrow floor is laid
Mid-ocean deep to the sheer mountain walls.

A SONNET OF DANTE

(*"Tanto gentile e tanto onesta pare."*)

So FAIR, so pure my lady as she doth go
Upon her way, and others doth salute,
That every tongue becometh trembling-mute,
And every eye is troubled by that glow.
Her praise she hears as on she moveth slow,
Clothed with humility as with a suit;
She seems a thing that came (without dispute)
From heaven to earth a miracle to show.
Through eyes that gaze on her benignity
There passes to the heart a sense so sweet
That none can understand who may not prove;
And from her countenance there seems to move
A gentle spirit, with all love replete,
That to the soul comes, saying, "Sigh, O sigh!"

THE NEW TROUBADOURS

(AVIGNON, 1879)

THEY said that all the troubadours had flown —
No bird to flash a wing or swell a throat!
But as we journeyed down the rushing Rhone
To Avignon, what joyful note on note

Burst forth beneath thy shadow, O Ventour !
Whose eastward forehead takes the dawn divine ;—
Ah, dear Provence ! ah, happy troubadour,
And that sweet, mellow, antique song of thine !
First, Roumanille, the leader of the choir,
Then graceful Matthieu, tender, sighing, glowing,
Then Wyse all fancy, Aubanel all fire,
And Mistral, mighty as the north-wind's blowing ;
And youthful Gras, and lo ! among the rest
A mother-bird who sang above her nest.

KEATS

TOUCH not with dark regret his perfect fame,
Sighing, " Had he but lived he had done so " ;
Or, " Were his heart not eaten out with woe
John Keats had won a prouder, mightier name ! "
Take him for what he was and did — nor blame
Blind fate for all he suffered. Thou shouldst know
Souls such as his escape no mortal blow —
No agony of joy, or sorrow, or shame !
" Whose name was writ in water ! " What large laughter
Among the immortals when that word was brought !
Then when his fiery spirit rose flaming after
High toward the topmost heaven of heavens up-caught !
" All hail ! our younger brother ! " Shakespeare said,
And Dante nodded his imperial head.

AN INSCRIPTION IN ROME

(PIAZZA DI SPAGNA)

SOMETHING there is in Death not all unkind ;
He hath a gentler aspect, looking back ;
For flowers may bloom in the dread thunder's track,
And even the cloud that struck with light was lined.

Thus, when the heart is silent, speaks the mind ;
But there are moments when comes rushing, black
And fierce upon us, the old, awful lack,
And Death once more is cruel, senseless, blind.
So when I saw beside a Roman portal
"In this house died John Keats"—for tears that sprung
I could no further read. O bard immortal !
Not for thy fame's sake — but so young, so young ;
Such beauty vanished ; spilled such heavenly wine ;
All quenched that power of deathless song divine !

DESECRATION

THE poet died last night ;
Outworn his mortal frame.
He hath fought well the fight,
And won a deathless name.
Bring laurel for his bier,
And flowers to deck the hearse.
The tribute of a tear
To his immortal verse.
Hushed is that piercing strain —
Who heard, for pleasure wept.
His were our joy and pain ;
He sang — our sorrow slept.
.. Yes, weep for him ; no more
Shall such high songs have birth ;
Gone is the harp he bore
Forever from the earth.
Weep, weep, and scatter flowers
Above his precious dust ;
Child of the heavenly powers —
Divine, and pure, and just.

Weep, weep — for when to-night
 Shall hoot the hornéd owl,
 Beneath the pale moon's light
 The human ghouls will prowl.

What creatures those will throng
 Within the sacred gloom,
 To do our poet wrong —
 . To break the sealéd tomb?

Not the great world and gay
 That pities not, nor halts
 By thoughtless night or day,
 But,— O more sordid-false! —

His trusted friend and near,
 To whom his spirit moved;
 The brother he held dear;
 The woman that he loved.

“JOCOSERIA”

MEN grow old before their time,
 With the journey half before them;
 In languid rhyme
 They deplore them.

Life up-gathers carks and cares,
 So good-by to maid and lover!
 Find three gray hairs,
 And cry “All 's over!”

Look at Browning! How he keeps
 In the seventies still a heart
 That never sleeps —
 Still an art

Full of youth's own grit and power,
Thoughts we deemed to boys belonging ;
The springtime's flower —
Love-and-longing.

TO AN ENGLISH FRIEND

WITH EMERSON'S "POEMS"

EDMUND, in this book you 'll find
Music from a prophet's mind.
Even when harsh the numbers be,
There 's an inward melody ;
And when sound is one with sense,
'T is a bird's song, sweet, intense.
Chide me not the book is small,
For in it lies our all in all.
We who in El Dorado live
Have no better gift to give.
When no more is silver mill,
Golden stream, or iron hill —
Search the New World from pole to pole,
Here you 'll find its singing soul !

OUR ELDER POETS

(1878)

HE is gone ! We shall not see again
That reverend form, those silver locks ;
Silent at last the iron pen
And words that poured like molten rocks.

He is gone, and we who thought him cold
Miss from our lives a generous heat,
And know that stolid form did hold
A fire that burned, a heart that beat.

He is gone, but other bards remain —
Our gray old prophet, young at heart,
Our scholar-poet's patriot strain ;
And he of the wise and mellow art.

And he who first to science sought,
But to the merry muses after ;
Who learned a secret never taught —
The knowledge of men's tears and laughter.

He also in whose music rude
Our peopled hills and prairies speak,
Resounding, in his modern mood,
The tragic fury of the Greek.

And he, too, lingers round about
The darling city of his birth —
The bard whose gray eyes looking out
Find scarce one peer in all the earth.

LONGFELLOW'S "BOOK OF SONNETS"

'T WAS Sunday evening as I wandered down
The central highway of this swarming place,
And felt a pleasant stillness — not a trace
Of Saturday's harsh turmoil in the town ;
Then as a gentle breeze just stirs a gown,
Yet almost motionless, or as the face
Of silence smiles, I heard the chimes of "Grace"
Sound murmuring through the autumn evening's
brown.

To-day, again, I passed along Broadway
In the fierce tumult and mid-noise of noon,
While 'neath my feet the solid pavement shook;
When lo! it seemed that bells began to play
Upon a Sabbath eve a silver tune —
For as I walked I read the poet's book.

“H. H.”

I WOULD that in the verse she loved some word,
Not all unfit, I to her praise might frame —
Some word wherein the memory of her name
Should through long years its incense still afford.
But no, her spirit smote with its own sword;
Herself has lit the fire whose blood-red flame
Shall not be quenched — this is her living fame
Who struck so well the sonnet's subtle chord.
None who e'er knew her can believe her dead;
Though should she die they deem it well might be
Her spirit took its everlasting flight
In summer's glory, by the sunset sea —
That onward through the Golden Gate it fled.
Ah, where that bright soul is cannot be night.

THE MODERN RHYMER

I

Now you who rhyme, and I who rhyme,
Have not we sworn it, many a time,
That we no more our verse would scrawl,
For Shakespeare he had sung it all!

And yet whatever others see
The earth is fresh to you and me ;
And birds that sing, and winds that blow,
And blooms that make the country glow,
And lusty swains, and maidens bright,
And clouds by day, and stars by night,
And all the pictures in the skies
That moved before Will Shakespeare's eyes ;
Love, hate, and scorn ; frost, fire, and flower ;
On us as well as him have power.
Go to ! our spirits shall not be laid,
Silenced and smothered by a shade.
Avon is not the only stream
Can make a poet sing and dream ;
Nor are those castles, queens, and kings
The height of sublunary things.

II

Beneath the false moon's pallid glare,
By the cool fountain in the square
(This gray-green dusty square they set
Where two gigantic highways met)
We hear a music rare and new,
Sweet Shakespeare was not known to you !
You saw the New World's sun arise ;
High up it shines in our own skies.
You saw the ocean from the shore ;
Through mid-seas now our ship doth roar —
A wild, new, teeming world of men
That wakens in the poet's brain
Thoughts that were never thought before
Of hope, and longing, and despair,
Wherein man's never-resting race

Westward, still westward, on doth fare,
Doth still subdue, and still aspire,
Or turning on itself doth face
Its own indomitable fire;—
O million-centuried thoughts that make
The Past seem but a shallop's wake!

TWO WORLDS
AND OTHER POEMS



TWO WORLDS

AND OTHER POEMS

PART I

TWO WORLDS

I. THE VENUS OF MILO

GRACE, majesty, and the calm bliss of life ;
No conscious war 'twixt human will and duty ;
Here breathes, forever free from pain and strife,
The old, untroubled pagan world of beauty.

II. MICHAEL ANGELO'S SLAVE

OF life, of death the mystery and woe,
Witness in this mute, carven stone the whole.
That suffering smile were never fashioned so
Before the world had wakened to a soul.

PART II

THE STAR IN THE CITY

AS down the city street
I pass at the twilight hour,
'Mid the noise of wheels and hoofs
That grind on the stones, and beat ;—

Upward, by spire and tower,
Over the chimneys and roofs
Climbs my glance to the skies,
And I see, with a glad surprise,
A mist with a core of light.

Slowly, as grows the night,—
As the sky turns blue from gray,—
Slowly it beams more bright,
And keeps with me on my way.

Soul of the twilight star
That leads me from afar,
Spirit that keener glows
As the daylight darker grows;
That leaps the chasm of blue
Where the cross-street thunders through,
And follows o'er roof and spire,
In the night-time soaring higher;
I know thee, and only I,
Thou comrade of the sky —
Star of the poet's heart,
The light and soul of his art.

MOONLIGHT

I

'T is twelve o' the clock.
The town is still;
As gray as a rock
From gable to sill
Each cottage is standing.
The narrow street
(Where the tree-tops meet),
From the woods to the landing,
Is black with shadows;

The roofs are white,
And white are the meadows;
The harbor is bright.
Can this be night?

II

'T is twelve o' the clock.
The town is still;
As still as a stock
From harbor to hill.
The moon's broad marge
Has no stars near,
Far off how clear
They shine, how large!
Something is strange
In the air, in the light;
Come forth! Let us range
In the black, in the white,
Through the day-like night.

III

In the elm-trees all
No flutter, no twitter;
From the granite wall
The small stars glitter.
A filmy thread
My forehead brushes;
A meteor rushes
From green to red.
Nought is but the bliss
Of this dark, of this white,
Of these stars—of this kiss,
O my Love and my Light
In the day and the night.

"I CARE NOT IF THE SKIES ARE WHITE"

I

I CARE not if the skies are white,
Nor if the fields are gold ;
I care not whether 't is black or bright,
Or winds blow soft or cold ;
But O the dark, dark woods,
For thee, and me, and love.

II

Let all but us at last depart,
The great world say farewell !
This is the kingdom of the heart,
Where only three may dwell ;
And O the dark, dark woods,
For thee, and me, and love.

CONTRASTS

I

THUNDER in the north sky,
Sunshine in the south ;
Frowning eyes and forehead
And a smiling mouth.

II

Maiden in the morning —
Love her? Yes, but fear her!
In the moony shadows —
Nearer, nearer, nearer!

SERENADE

(FOR MUSIC)

I

DEEP in the ocean of night
A pearl through the darkness shines ;
Asleep in the garden of night
A lily's head reclines ;
Afar in the forest of night
Dreams the nightingale ;
Clouds in the sky of night
Make one bright star grow pale.

II

O thou, sweet soul of my love,
Art my pearl, my lily-flower ;
Thou, hiding heart of my love,
Art my bird, in thy maiden bower ;
Heart of my only love
That shin'st in the heavens afar —
Thou, in the night of love,
Art my one, dear, trembling star.

III

Let me draw thee to the light
Pearl of the shadowy sea !
Awake, thou lily of light,
Turn thy face divine on me !
Arouse thee, bird of the night,
Let thy voice to my voice reply !
Star of thy lover's night,
Shine forth or I die — I die !

LARGESS

I

SWEET mouth, dark eyes, deep heart —

All of beauty, all of glamour heaven could fashion
With its divinest art;

A woman's life and love, a woman's passion :

II

But these, at last, to win,

Land, or sea, or hell, or heaven might well be ravished
At price of any sin —

Yet freely all she on her lover lavished.

INDOORS, AT NIGHT

THE window's white, the candle's red,
Show evening falleth overhead ;

The candle's red, the window's black,
And earth is close in midnight's sack ;

The candle fades,

The midnight shades

Turn suddenly a starry blue —

And now to dreams, my soul, of you !

THE ABSENT LOVER

THE purple of the summer fields, the dark
Of forests, and the upward mountain sweep —
Broken by crags, and scar of avalanche ;
The trembling of the tops of million trees ;

A world of sunlight thrilled with winds of dawn;
All these I feel, I breathe, all these I am
When with closed eyes I bring thy presence near,
And touch thy spirit with my spirit's love.

“TO-NIGHT THE MUSIC DOTH
A BURDEN BEAR ”

TO-NIGHT the music doth a burden bear —
One word that moans and murmurs ; doth exhale
Tremulously as perfume on the air
From out a rose blood-red, or lily pale.
The burden is thy name, dear soul of me,
Which the rapt melodist unknowing all
Still doth repeat through fugue and reverie ;
Thy name, to him unknown, to me doth call,
And weeps my heart at every music-fall.

SANCTUM SANCTORUM

I

I THOUGHT I knew the mountain's every mood,
Gray, black with storms, or lit by lightening dawn ;
But once in evening twilight came a spell
Upon its brow, that held me with new power ;
A look of unknown beauty, a deep mood
Touched with a sorrow as of human kind.

II

I thought I knew full well my comrade's face,
But a new face it was to me this day.

She sat among the worshipers and heard
The preacher's voice, yet listened not, but leaned
Her head unto a tone whose accents fell
On her sweet spirit only. Deep the awe
Struck then upon me, for my friend no more
Seemed to be near, as with forgetting gaze,
And piteous features steeped in tenderness,
She thought on things unspeakable — unknown
To all the world beside.

III

When forth doth pass,
In holy pilgrimage and awful quest,
The soul of thy soul's comrade, thou must stand
In silence by, and let it move alone
And unattended far to the inner shrine;
Thou canst but wait, and bow thine head, and pray;
And well for thee if thou may'st prove so pure,—
Ended that hour,— thy comrade thou regain'st,
Thine as before, or even more deeply thine.

THE GIFT

I

LIFE came to me and spoke :
"A palace for thee I have built
Wherein to take thy pleasure ;
I have filled it with priceless treasure ;
Seven days shalt thou dwell therein ;
Thy joy shall be keener than sin,
Without the stain of guilt —
Enter the door of oak !"

II

I entered the oaken door ;
Within, no ray of light ;
I saw no golden store,
My heart stood still with fright ;
To curse Life was I fain ;
Then one unseen before
Laid in my own her hand,
And said : " Come thou and know
This is the House of Woe ;—
I am Life's sister, Pain."

III

Through many a breathless way,
In dark, on dizzying height,
She led me through the day
And into the dreadful night.
My soul was sore distressed
And wildly I longed for rest ;—
Till a chamber met my sight,
Far off, and hid, and still,
With diamonds all bedight
And every precious thing ;
Not even a god might will
More beauty there to bring.

IV

Then spoke Life's sister, Pain :
" Here thou as a king shalt reign,
Here shalt thou take thy pleasure,
This is the priceless treasure,
The chamber of thy delight
Through endless day and night ;
Rejoice, this is the end —
Thou hast found the heart of a friend."

“AH, TIME, GO NOT SO SOON”

AH, Time, go not so soon ;
I would not thus be used, I would forego that boon ;
Turn back, swift Time, and let
Me many a year forget ;
Let her be strange once more — an unfamiliar tune,
An unimagined flower,
Not known till that mute, wondrous hour
When first we met !

“THE YEARS ARE ANGELS”

THE years are angels that bring down from Heaven
Gifts of the gods. What has the angel given
Who last night vanished up the heavenly wall ?
He gave a friend — the gods' best gift of all.

“IN HER YOUNG EYES”

IN her young eyes the children looked and found
Their happy comrade. Summer souls false-bound
In age's frosty winter,— without ruth,—
Lived once again in her their long-lost youth.

“YESTERDAY, WHEN WE WERE FRIENDS”

I

YESTERDAY, when we were friends,
We were scarcely friends at all ;
Now we have been friends so long,
And our love has grown so strong.

II

When to-morrow's eve shall fall
We shall say, as night descends,
Again shall say: Ah, yesterday
Scarcely were we friends at all —
Now we have been friends so long;
Our love has grown so deep, so strong.

A NIGHT SONG

(FOR THE GUITAR)

THE leaves are dark and large, Love,
'T is blue at every marge, Love;

The stars hang in the tree, Love,
I 'll pluck them all for thee, Love;

The crescent moon is curled, Love,
Down at the edge of the world, Love;

I 'll run and bring it now, Love,
To crown thy gentle brow, Love;

For in my song
The summer long

The stars, and moon, and night, Love,
Are but for thy delight, Love!

LEO

I

OVER the roofs of the houses I hear the barking of Leo —
Leo the shaggy, the lustrous, the giant, the gentle New-
foundland.

Dark are his eyes as the night, and black is his hair as
the midnight ;
Large and slow is his tread till he sees his master
returning,
Then how he leaps in the air, with motion ponderous,
frightening !
Now as I pass to my work I hear o'er the roar of the
city —
Far over the roofs of the houses, I hear the barking of
Leo ;
For me he is moaning and crying, for me in measure
sonorous
He raises his marvelous voice, for me he is wailing and
calling.

II

None can assuage his grief though but for a day is the
parting,
Though morn after morn 't is the same, though home
every night comes his master,
Still will he grieve when we sever, and wild will be his
rejoicing
When at night his master returns and lays but a hand
on his forehead.
No lack will there be in the world of faith, of love, and
devotion,
No lack for me and for mine, while Leo alone is living —
While over the roofs of the houses I hear the barking of
Leo.

PART III

BROTHERS

PASSION is a wayward child,
 Art his brother firm and mild.
 Lonely each
 Doth fail to reach
 Height of music, song, or speech.
 If hand in hand they sally forth,
 East or west, or south or north,
 Nought can stay them
 Nor delay them.
 Slaves not they of space or time
 In their journeyings sublime.

LOVE, ART, AND TIME

ON A PICTURE ENTITLED "THE PORTRAIT,"

BY WILL H. LOW

SWEET Grecian girl who on the sunbright wall
 Tracest the outline of thy lover's shade,
 While, on the dial near, Time's hand is laid
 With silent motion — fearest thou, then, all?
 How that one day the light shall cease to fall
 On him who is thy light; how lost, dismayed,—
 By Time, and Time's pale comrade Death,
 betrayed,—
 Thou shalt breathe on beneath the all-shadowing
 pall!

Love, Art, and Time, these are the triple powers
That rule the world, and shall for many a morrow —
Love that beseecheth Art to conquer Time!
Bright is the picture, but, O fading flowers!
O youth that passes! love that bringeth sorrow!—
Bright is the picture; sad the poet's rhyme.

THE DANCERS

ON A PICTURE ENTITLED "SUMMER," BY T. W. DEWING

BEHOLD these maidens in a row
Against the birches' freshening green;
Their lines like music sway and flow;
They move before the emerald screen
Like broidered figures dimly seen
On woven cloths, in moony glow —
Gracious, and graceful, and serene.
They hear the harp; its lovely tones
Each maiden in each motion owns,
As if she were a living note
Which from that curvéd harp doth float.

THE TWENTY-THIRD OF APRIL

A LITTLE English earth and breathéd air
Made Shakespeare the divine; so is his verse
The broidered soil of every blossom fair;
So doth his song all sweet bird-songs rehearse.
But tell me, then, what wondrous stuff did fashion
That part of him which took those wilding flights
Among imagined worlds; whence the white passion
That burned three centuries through the days and
nights!

Not heaven's four winds could make, nor the round earth,
The soul wherefrom the soul of Hamlet flamed ;
Nor anything of merely mortal birth
Could lighten as when Shakespeare's name is named.
How was his body bred we know full well,
But that high soul's engendering who may tell !

EMMA LAZARUS

WHEN on thy bed of pain thou layest low
Daily we saw thy body fade away,
Nor could the love wherewith we loved thee stay
For one dear hour the flesh borne down by woe ;
But as the mortal sank, with what white glow
Flamed thy eternal spirit, night and day ;
Untouched, unwasted, though the crumbling clay
Lay wrecked and ruined ! Ah, is it not so,
Dear poet-comrade, who from sight hast gone ;
Is it not so that spirit hath a life
Death may not conquer ? But, O dauntless one !
Still must we sorrow. Heavy is the strife
And thou not with us ; thou of the old race
That with Jehovah parleyed, face to face.

THE TWELFTH OF DECEMBER

ON this day Browning died ?
Say, rather : On the tide
That throbs against those glorious palace walls ;
That rises — pauses — falls

With melody and myriad-tinted gleams;
On that enchanted tide,
Half real, and half poured from lovely dreams,
A soul of Beauty,—a white, rhythmic flame,—
Passed singing forth into the Eternal Beauty whence it
came.

PART IV

SHERIDAN

I

QUIETLY, like a child
That sinks in slumber mild,
No pain or troubled thought his well-earned peace to
mar,
Sank into endless rest our thunderbolt of war.

II

Though his the power to smite
Quick as the lightning's light,—
His single arm an army, and his name a host,—
Not his the love of blood, the warrior's cruel boast.

III

But in the battle's flame
How glorious he came! —
Even like a white-combed wave that breaks and tears
the shore,
While wreck lies strewn behind, and terror flies before.

IV

'T was he,—his voice, his might,—
Could stay the panic-flight,

Alone shame back the headlong, many-leagued retreat,
And turn to evening triumph morning's foul defeat.

V

He was our modern Mars ;
Yet firm his faith that wars
Ere long would cease to vex the sad, ensanguined earth,
And peace forever reign, as at Christ's holy birth.

VI

Blest land, in whose dark hour
Arise to loftiest power
No dazzlers of the sword to play the tyrant's part,
But patriot-soldiers, true and pure and high of heart !

VII

Of such our chief of all ;
And he who broke the wall
Of civil strife in twain, no more to build or mend ;
And he who hath this day made Death his faithful friend

VIII

And now above his tomb
From out the eternal gloom
" Welcome ! " his chieftain's voice sounds o'er the can-
non's knell ;
And of the three one only stays to say " Farewell ! "

SHERMAN

I

GLORY and honor and fame and everlasting laudation
For our captains who loved not war, but fought for the
life of the nation ;

Who knew that, in all the land, one slave meant strife,
not peace ;

Who fought for freedom, not glory ; made war that war
might cease.

II

Glory and honor and fame ; the beating of muffled
drums ;

The wailing funeral dirge, as the flag-wrapped coffin
comes.

Fame and honor and glory, and joy for a noble soul ;
For a full and splendid life, and laureled rest at the goal.

III

Glory and honor and fame ; the pomp that a soldier
prizes ;

The league-long waving line as the marching falls and
rises ;

Rumbling of caissons and guns ; the clatter of horses'
feet,

And a million awe-struck faces far down the waiting
street.

IV

But better than martial woe, and the pageant of civic
sorrow ;

Better than praise of to-day, or the statue we build
to-morrow ;

Better than honor and glory, and history's iron pen,
Was the thought of duty done and the love of his
fellowmen.

PRO PATRIA

IN MEMORY OF A FAITHFUL CHAPLAIN¹

I

EREWHILE I sang the praise of them whose lustrous
names

Flashed in war's dreadful flames;
Who rose in glory, and in splendor, and in might
To fame's sequestered height.

II

Honor to all, for each his honors meekly carried,
Nor e'er the conquered harried;
All honor, for they sought alone to serve the state—
Not merely to be great.

III

Yes, while the glorious past our grateful memory
craves,
And while yon bright flag waves,
Lincoln, Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, the peerless four,
Shall live forever more;

IV

Shall shine the eternal stars of stern and loyal love,
All other stars above;
The imperial nation they made one, at last, and free,
Their monument shall be.

¹ The chaplain referred to lost his life through taking upon himself the visitation of the army smallpox hospital, near the camp of his regiment, the 40th New York Volunteers, at Brandy Station, Virginia, April, 1864.

V

Ah yes! but ne'er may we forget the praise to sound
Of the brave souls that found
Death in the myriad ranks, 'mid blood, and groans, and
stenches —
Tombs in the abhorréd trenches.

VI

Comrades! To-day a tear-wet garland I would bring —
But one song let me sing,
For one sole hero of my heart and desolate home;
Come with me, Comrades, come!

VII

Bring your glad flowers, your flags, for this one humble
grave;
For, Soldiers, he was brave!
Though fell not he before the cannon's thunderous
breath,
Yet noble was his death.

VIII

True soldier of his country and the sacred cross —
He counted gain, not loss,
Perils and nameless horrors of the embattled field,
While he had help to yield.

IX

But not where 'mid wild cheers the awful battle broke,—
A hell of fire and smoke,—
He to heroic death went forth with soul elate;
Harder his lonely fate.

X

Searching where most was needed, worst of all endured,
Sufferers he found immured,—
Tented apart because of fatal, foul disease,—
Balm brought he unto these ;

XI

Celestial balm, the spirit's holy ministry,
He brought, and only he ;
Where men who blanched not at the battle's shell and
shot
Trembled, and entered not.

XII

Yet life to him was oh, most dear,— home, children,
wife,—
But, dearer still than life,
Duty — that passion of the soul which from the sod
Alone lifts man to God.

XIII

The pest-house entering fearless — stricken he fearless fell,
Knowing that all was well ;
The high, mysterious Power whereof mankind has
dreamed
To him not distant seemed.

XIV

So nobly died this unknown hero of the war ;
And heroes, near and far,
Sleep now in graves like his unfamed in song or story —
But theirs is more than glory !

TO THE SPIRIT OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

(REUNION AT GETTYSBURG TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AFTER
THE BATTLE)

SHADE of our greatest, O look down to-day!
Here the long, dread midsummer battle roared,
And brother in brother plunged the accurséd sword;—
Here foe meets foe once more in proud array
Yet not as once to harry and to slay
But to strike hands, and with sublime accord
Weep tears heroic for the souls that soared
Quick from earth's carnage to the starry way.
Each fought for what he deemed the people's good,
And proved his bravery with his offered life,
And sealed his honor with his outpoured blood;
But the Eternal did direct the strife,
And on this sacred field one patriot host
Now calls thee father,—dear, majestic ghost!

FAILURE AND SUCCESS

HE fails who climbs to power and place
Up the pathway of disgrace.
He fails not who makes truth his cause,
Nor bends to win the crowd's applause.
He fails not, he who stakes his all
Upon the right, and dares to fall;—
What though the living bless or blame,
For him the long success of fame.

J. R. L.

ON HIS BIRTHDAY

NAVIES nor armies can exalt the state ;
Millions of men, nor coined wealth untold ;
Down to the pit may sink a land of gold ;
But one great name can make a country great.

NAPOLEON

A SOUL inhuman ? No, but human all,
If human is each passion man has known :
Scorn, hate, and love ; the lust of empire, grown
To such a height as did the world appal ; —
If the same human soul may soar and crawl
As soared his and as crawled ; if to be shown
The utmost heaven and hell ; if to atone
For fame consummate by colossal fall ; —
If human 't is to see friend, partizan
Turn, dastardly, the imperial hand to tear
That fed them ; if through gnawing years to plan
Vengeance, and space to breathe the unfettered air —
No alien from his kind but very man
Slow perished on that island of despair.

THE WHITE TSAR'S PEOPLE

PART I

THE White Tsar's people cry :
"Thou God of the heat and the cold,
Of storm and of lightning,
Of darkness, and dawn's red brightening ;

Hold, Lord God, hold,
Hold Thy hand lest we curse Thee and die."

The White Tsar's people pray :
"Thou God of the South and the North,
We are crushed, we are bleeding ;
'T is Christ, 't is Thy Son interceding ;
Forth, Lord, come forth !
Bid the slayer no longer slay."

The White Tsar's people call ·
Aloud to the skies of lead :
"We are slaves, not freemen ;
Ourselves, our children, our women —
Dead, we are dead,
Though we breathe, we are dead men all.

"Blame not if we misprize thee
Who can, but will not draw near.
'T is Thou who hast made us —
Not Thou, dread God, to upbraid us.
Hear, Lord God, hear !
Lest we whom Thou madest despise Thee."

PART II

Then answered the most high God,
Lord of the heat and the cold,
Of storm and of lightning,
Of darkness, and dawn's red brightening :
"Bold, yea, too bold,
Whom I wrought from the air and the clod !

"Hast thou forgotten from me
Are those ears so quick to hear

The passion and anguish
Of your sisters, your children who languish
Near? Ah, not near —
Far off by the uttermost sea!

“Who gave ye your hearts to bleed
And brains to weave and to plan?
Why call ye on heaven —
’T is the earth that to you is given!
Plead, ye may plead,
But for man I work through man.

“Who gave ye a voice to utter
Your tale to the wind and the sea?
One word well spoken
And the iron gates are broken!
From me, yea, from me
The word that ye will not mutter.

“I love not murder but ruth.
Begone from my sight ye who take
The knife of the coward —
Even ye who by heaven were dowered!
Wake ye, O wake,
And strike with the sword of Truth!

“Fear ye lest I misprize ye —
I who fashioned not brutes, but men.
After the lightning
And darkness — the dawn’s red brightening!
Men! Be ye men!
Lest I who made ye despise ye!”

PART V

HIDE NOT THY HEART

I

THIS is my creed,
This be my deed:
“Hide not thy heart!”
Soon we depart;
Mortals are all;
A breath, then the pall;
A flash on the dark —
All 's done — stiff and stark.
No time for a lie;
The truth, and then die.
Hide not thy heart!

II

Forth with thy thought!
Soon 't will be nought,
And thou in thy tomb.
Now is air, now is room.
Down with false shame;
Reck not of fame;
Dread not man's spite;
Quench not thy light.
This be thy creed,
This be thy deed:
“Hide not thy heart!”

III

If God is, he made
Sunshine and shade,

Heaven and hell ;
 This we know well.
 Dost thou believe ?
 Do not deceive ;
 Scorn not thy faith —
 If 'tis a wraith,
 Soon it will fly.
 Thou, who must die,
 Hide not thy heart !

IV

This is my creed ;
 This be my deed :
 Faith, or a doubt,
 I shall speak out
 And hide not my heart.

“THE POET FROM HIS OWN SORROW”

THE poet from his own sorrow
 Poured forth a love-sad song.
 A stranger, on the morrow,
 Drew near, with a look of wrong,
 And said : “ Beneath its pall
 I have hidden my heart in vain —
 To the world thou hast sung it all !
 Who told thee my secret pain ? ”

“WHITE, PILLARED NECK”

I

WHITE, pillared neck ; a brow to make men quake ;
 A woman's perfect form ;
 Like some cool marble, should that wake,
 Breathe, and be warm.

II

A shape, a mind, a heart,
Of womanhood the whole :
Her breath, her smile, her touch, her art,
All — save her soul.

“GREAT NATURE IS AN ARMY GAY”

GREAT nature is an army gay,
Resistless marching on its way ;
I hear the bugles clear and sweet,
I hear the tread of million feet.

Across the plain I see it pour ;
It tramples down the waving grass ;
Within the echoing mountain-pass
I hear a thousand cannon roar.

It swarms within my garden gate ;
My deepest well it drinketh dry.
It doth not rest ; it doth not wait ;
By night and day it sweepeth by ;
Ceaseless it marches by my door ;
It heeds me not, though I implore.
I know not whence it comes, nor where
It goes. For me it doth not care —
Whether I starve, or eat, or sleep,
Or live, or die, or sing, or weep.
And now the banners all are bright,
Now torn and blackened by the fight.
Sometimes its laughter shakes the sky,
Sometimes the groans of those who die.
Still through the night and through the livelong day
The infinite army marches on its remorseless way.

"LIFE IS THE COST"

I

LIFE is the cost.
Behold yon tower,
That heavenward lifts
To the cloudy drifts —
Like a flame, like a flower!
What lightness, what grace,
What a dream of power!
One last endeavor
One stone to place —
And it stands forever.

II

A slip, a fall;
A cry, a call;
Turn away, all 's done.
Stands the tower in the sun
Forever and a day.
On the pavement below
The crimson stain
Will be worn away
In the ebb and flow;
The tower will remain.
Life is the cost.

THE PRISONER'S THOUGHT

I

Is 't I for whom the law's brute penalty
Was made; to whom the law once seemed a power
Far off and not to be concerned withal?
Am I indeed this rank and noisome thing

Fit for such handling; to be pushed aside
Into a human, foul receptacle,
A fetid compost of dull, festering crime
Even not meet for nutriment of earth,
But only here to rot in memories
Of my own shame, and shame of other men?

Here let me rot then—there 's a taste one has
For just the best of all things, even of sin.
He 's a poor devil who in deepest hell
Knows no keen relish for the worst that is,—
The very acme of intensest pain,—
Nor smacks charred lips at thoughts of some dear crime
The sweetest, deadliest, damnablest of all.
Sometimes I hug that hellish happiness;
And then a loathing falls upon my soul
For what I was, and am, and still must be.

II

And this same I — there comes to me a time,
And often comes, when all this slips away;
Stays not one stain, nor scar, nor fatal hurt.
Perhaps it is a sort of waking dream;
But if I dream, I 'm breathing audibly,
I feel my pulse beat, hear the talk and tread
Down these long corridors; see the barred blue
Of the cell's window, hear a singing bird —
Yes, O my God, I hear a singing bird,
Such as I heard in childhood. Now, you think,
I dream I am a child once more. Not so;
I am just what I am; a man in prison—
(Damn them! I 'm innocent of what they swore
And proved — with cant, and well-paid perjury;
Though other crimes, they know not of, I did) —

But suddenly my soul is pure as yours;
My thoughts as clean; my spirit is as free
As any man's, or any purest woman's.
I think as justly, as for instance, sir,
You think; as circumspectly, wisely, freely,
As does my jolly keeper, or the smith
Who enters once a day to try the bars
That shut my body out from freedom! Not
My soul. Why, this my soul has thoughts that strike
Into the very heights and depths of Heaven.
You 'll think it passing strange, good friend, no doubt.
'T is strange; but here 's a further mystery:
Think you that in some other living state
After what we call death,—or in this life,—
The thinking part of us we name the soul
Can ever get away from its old self;
Can wash the earth all off from it, that so
It really will be, what I sometimes seem —
As sinless as a little child at birth,
With all a woman's love for all things pure,
And all a grown man's strength to do the right?

THE CONDEMNED

THOU art not fit to die?— Why not?
The fairest body ripe to rot.
Thy soul? Oh, why not let it go
Free from the flesh that drags it low!
To die! Poor wretch, do not deceive
Thyself— who art not fit to live.

“SOW THOU SORROW”

Sow thou sorrow and thou shalt reap it ;
Sow thou joy and thou shalt keep it.

TEMPTATION

Not alone in pain and gloom,
Does the abhorréd tempter come ;
Not in light alone and pleasure
Proffers he the poisoned measure.

When the soul doth rise
Nearest to its native skies,
There the exalted spirit finds
Borne upon the heavenly winds
Satan, in an angel's guise,
With voice divine and innocent eyes.

A MIDSUMMER MEDITATION

I

FACE once the thought : This piled up sky of cloud,
Blue vastness, and white vastness steeped in light,—
Struck through with light, that centers in the sun,—
This blue of waves below that meets blue sky ;
But a white, trembling shore between, that sweeps
The circle of the bay ; this green of woods,
And keener green of new-mown, grassy fields ;
This ceaseless, leaf-like rustle of the waves ;
These shining, billowy tree-tops ; songs of birds ;
Strong scent of seaweed, mixed with smell of pines ;
Face once this thought : Thy spirit that looks forth,
That breathes the light, and life, and joy of all,

Shall cease, but not the things that pleasure thee ;
They shall endure for eyes like thine, but not
For thine own eyes ; for human hearts like thine,
But not for thine own heart, all dust and dead.

II

Face it, O Spirit, then look up once more,
Brave conqueror of dull mortality !
Look up and be a part of all thou see'st
Ocean and earth and miracle of sky,
All that thou see'st, thou art, and without thee
Were nothing. Thou, a god, dost recreate
The whole ; breathing thy soul in all, till all
Is one wide world made perfect at thy touch.
And know that thou, who darest a world create,
Art one with the Almighty, son to sire —
Of his eternity a quenchless spark.

“AS DOTH THE BIRD”

As doth the bird, on outstretched pinions, dare
The dread abysm's viewless air,
Take thou, my soul, thy fearless flight
Into the void and dark of death's eternal night.

IN THE CATSKILLS.

VISIONS

I

CAST into the pit
Of lonely sorrow,
The suffering soul,
Looking aloft,

Sees with amaze
In the daytime sky
The shine of stars.

II

CAME to me once
In the seething town
A form of beauty,
Innocent brow,
And soul of youth ;
Deep, sweet eyes,
An angel's gaze,
And rose-leaf lips
That murmured low :
" I, lost, forgotten,
Long left, long dead,
I am thy sin."

III

WITH full-toned beat
Of the happy heart,
In a day of peace,
In an hour of joy,
Once in my life
And only once,
Of a sudden, I saw,
The end of all !
— Death !

WITH A CROSS OF IMMORTELLES

WHEN Christ cried : " It is done ! "

The face of a small red flower,
Looking up to the suffering One,
Turned pale with love and pain,
And never shone red again.

In memory of that hour
Which holds the secret of bliss ;
And the darker secret of sorrow
That shall come to each, to-morrow ;
Sweet friend, I send you this.

THE PASSING OF CHRIST

I

O MAN of light and lore !
Do you mean that in our day
The Christ hath passed away ;
That nothing now is divine
In the fierce rays that shine
Through every cranny and thought ;
That Christ as he once was taught
Shall be the Christ no more ?
That the Hope and Saviour of men
Shall be seen no more again ;
That, miracles being done,
Gone is the Holy One ?
And thus, you hold, this Christ
For the past alone sufficed ;
From the throne of the hearts of the world
The Son of God shall be hurled,

And henceforth must be sought
New prophets and kings of thought ;
That the tenderest, truest word
The heart of sorrow hath heard
Shall sound no more upon earth ;
That he who hath made of birth
A dread and holy rite ;
Who hath brought to the eyes of death
A vision of heavenly light,
Shall fade with our failing faith ;—
He who saw in children's eyes
Eternal paradise ;
Who looked through shame and sin
At the sanctity within ;
Whose memory, since he died,
The earth hath sanctified —
Hath been the stay and the hold
Of millions of lives untold,
And the world on its upward path
Hath led from crime and wrath ;—
You say that this Christ hath passed
And we cannot hold him fast ?

II

Ah no ! If the Christ you mean
Shall pass from this time, this scene,
These hearts, these lives of ours,
'T is but as the summer flowers
Pass, but return again,
To gladden a world of men.
For he,— the only, the true,—
In each age, in each waiting heart,
Leaps into life anew ;
Though he pass, he shall not depart.

Behold him now where he comes !
Not the Christ of our subtile creeds,
But the lord of our hearts, of our homes,
Of our hopes, our prayers, our needs ;
The brother of want and blame,
The lover of women and men,
With a love that puts to shame
All passions of mortal ken ; —
Yet of all of woman born
His is the scorn of scorn ;
Before whose face do fly
Lies, and the love of a lie ;
Who from the temple of God,
And the sacred place of laws,
Drives forth, with smiting rod,
The herds of ravening maws.

'T is he, as none other can,
Makes free the spirit of man,
And speaks, in darkest night,
One word of awful light
That strikes through the dreadful pain
Of life, a reason sane —
That word divine which brought
The universe from nought.

Ah no, thou life of the heart,
Never shalt thou depart !
Not till the leaven of God
Shall lighten each human clod ;
Not till the world shall climb
To thy height serene, sublime,
Shall the Christ who enters our door
Pass to return no more.

CREDO

How easily my neighbor chants his creed,
Kneeling beside me in the House of God.
His "I believe" he chants, and "I believe,"
With cheerful iteration and consent —
Watching meantime the white, slow sunbeam move
Across the aisle, or listening to the bird
Whose free, wild song sounds through the open door.

Thou God supreme,— I too, I too, believe!
But oh! forgive if this one human word,
Binding the deep and breathless thought of thee
And my own conscience with an iron band,
Stick in my throat. I cannot say it, thus —
This "I believe" that doth thyself obscure;
This rod to smite; this barrier; this blot
On thy most unimaginable face
And soul of majesty.

'T is not man's faith
In thee that he proclaims in echoed phrase,
But faith in man; faith not in thine own Christ,
But in another man's dim thought of him.

Christ of Judea, look thou in my heart!
Do I not love thee, look to thee, in thee
Alone have faith of all the sons of men —
Faith deepening with the weight and woe of years.

Pure soul and tenderest of all that came
Into this world of sorrow, hear my prayer:

Lead me, yea lead me deeper into life,
This suffering, human life wherein thou liv'st

And breathe still, and hold'st thy way divine.
'T is here, O pitying Christ, where thee I seek,
Here where the strife is fiercest ; where the sun
Beats down upon the highway thronged with men,
And in the raging mart. Oh ! deeper lead
My soul into the living world of souls
Where thou dost move.

But lead me, Man Divine,
Where'er thou will'st, only that I may find
At the long journey's end thy image there,
And grow more like to it. For art not thou
The human shadow of the infinite Love
That made and fills the endless universe !
The very Word of him, the unseen, unknown
Eternal Good that rules the summer flower
And all the worlds that people starry space !

NON SINE DOLORE

I

WHAT, then, is Life,— what Death ?
Thus the Answerer saith ;
O faithless mortal, bend thy head and listen :

Down o'er the vibrant strings,
That thrill, and moan, and mourn, and glisten,
The Master draws his bow.
A voiceless pause ; then upward, see, it springs,
Free as a bird with unimprisoned wings !
In twain the chord was cloven,
While, shaken with woe,
With breaks of instant joy all interwoven,
Piercing the heart with lyric knife,

On, on the ceaseless music sings,
Restless, intense, serene ;—
Life is the downward stroke ; the upward, Life ;
Death but the pause between.

II

Then spake the Questioner : If 't were only this,
Ah, who could face the abyss
That plunges steep athwart each human breath ?
If the new birth of Death
Meant only more of Life as mortals know it,
What priestly balm, what song of highest poet,
Could heal one sentient soul's immitigable pain ?
All, all were vain !
If, having soared pure spirit at the last,
Free from the impertinence and warp of flesh,
We find half joy, half pain, on every blast ;
Are caught again in closer-woven mesh —
Ah ! who would care to die
From out these fields and hills, and this familiar sky ;
These firm, sure hands that compass us, this dear
humanity ?

III

Again the Answerer saith :
O ye of little faith,
Shall, then, the spirit prove craven,
And Death's divine deliverance but give
A summer rest and haven ?
By all most noble in us, by the light that streams
Into our waking dreams,
Ah, we who know what Life is, let us live !
Clearer and freer, who shall doubt ?
Something of dust and darkness cast forever out ;

But Life, still Life, that leads to higher Life,
Even though the highest be not free from the immortal
strife.

The highest! Soul of man, oh, be thou bold,
And to the brink of thought draw near, behold!
Where, on the earth's green sod,
Where, where in all the universe of God,
Hath strife forever ceased?
When hath not some great orb flashed into space
The terror of its doom? When hath no human face
Turned earthward in despair,
For that some horrid sin had stamped its image there?

If at our passing Life be Life increased,
And we ourselves flame pure unfettered soul,
Like the Eternal Power that made the whole
And lives in all he made
From shore of matter to the unknown spirit shore;
If, sire to son, and tree to limb,
Cycle on countless cycle more and more
We grow to be like him;
If he lives on, serene and unafraid,
Through all his light, his love, his living thought,
One with the sufferer, be it soul or star;
If he escape not pain, what beings that are
Can e'er escape while Life leads on and up the unseen
way and far?
If he escape not, by whom all was wrought,
Then shall not we,—
Whate'er of godlike solace still may be,—
For in all worlds there is no Life without a pang, and
can be nought.

No Life without a pang ! It were not Life,
If ended were the strife —
Man were not man, nor God were truly God !

See from the sod

The lark thrill skyward in an arrow of song :
Even so from pain and wrong
Upsprings the exultant spirit, wild and free.
He knows not all the joy of liberty
Who never yet was crushed 'neath heavy woe.
He doth not know,
Nor can, the bliss of being brave
Who never hath faced death, nor with unquailing eye
hath measured his own grave.

Courage, and pity, and divinest scorn —
Self-scorn, self-pity, and high courage of the soul ;
The passion for the goal ;
The strength to never yield though all be lost —
All these are born
Of endless strife ; this is the eternal cost
Of every lovely thought that through the portal
Of human minds doth pass with following light.
Blanch not, O trembling mortal !
But with extreme and terrible delight
Know thou the truth,
Nor let thy heart be heavy with false ruth.

No passing burden is our earthly sorrow
That shall depart in some mysterious morrow.
'T is His one universe where'er we are —
One changeless law from sun to viewless star.
Were sorrow evil here, evil it were forever,
Beyond the scope and help of our most keen endeavor.
God doth not dote,

His everlasting purpose shall not fail.
Here where our ears are weary with the wail
And weeping of the sufferers; there where the Pleiads
float —
Here, there, forever, pain most dread and dire
Doth bring the intensest bliss, the dearest and most sure.
'T is not from Life aside, it doth endure
Deep in the secret heart of all existence.
It is the inward fire,
The heavenly urge, and the divine insistence.
Uplift thine eyes, O Questioner, from the sod!
It were no longer Life,
If ended were the strife;
Man were not man, God were not truly God.

PART VI

ODE

Read before the Society of the Phi Beta Kappa, Harvard University,
June 26, 1890.

I

IN the white midday's full imperious show
What glorious colors hide from human sight!
But in the breathing pause 'twixt day and night
Forth stream those prisoned splendors, glow on glow;
Like billows on they pour
And beat against the shore
Of cloud-wrought cliffs high as the utmost dome,
To die in purple waves that break on dawns to come.

II

Divine, divine! Oh, breathe no earthlier word!
Behold the western heavens how swift they flame
With hues that bring to mortal language shame;
Swelling and pulsing like deep music heard
On sacred summer eves
When the loud organ grieves
And thrills with lyric life the incensed air,
While 'mid the pillared gloom the people bow in prayer.

III

Now is it some huge bird with monstrous vans
That through the sunset plies its shadowy way,
Catching on outstretched pinions the last play
Of failing tint celestial! See! it spans
Darkly the fading west,
And now its beamy crest
Follows from sight the glittering, golden sun;
And now one mighty wing-beat more, and all is done.

IV

But in those skyey spaces what dread change!
Thus have we seen the mortal turn immortal;
So doth the day's soul die, as through death's portal
The soul of man takes up its heavenward range.
A million orbs endue
The unfathomable blue —
Till, the long miracle of night withdrawn,
The world beholds once more the miracle of dawn.

V

Dawn, eve, and night, the iridescent seas,
Bright moon, enlightening sun, and quivering stars,
The midnight rose whose petals are the bars

Of Boreal lights, the pomp of autumn trees,
The pearl of curv'd shells,
The prisms bow that swells
'Gainst stormy skies—these witness, these are sign
Of thee, O spirit of Beauty, eternal and divine!

VI

And fairer still than all,—chief sign of all,—
The naked loveliness in Eden's bower,
Whose flesh blushed back the tint of fruit and flower;
Whose eye rekindled the starlight; who could call
Father and friend the God
That plucked them from the sod;
The Almighty's image, and Creation's height;
Whose deep souls mirrored clear the circling day and
night.

VII

Spirit of Beauty! 'neath thy joyful spell
Man hath been ever; therefore doth each breeze
Bring to his tranced ears glad melodies,—
Voices of birds, the brook's low, silvery bell,—
Wild music manifold,
Which he hath power to hold
His own enchanted harmonies among,
That echo round the world the songs that nature sung.

VIII

And thus all Beautiful in Holiness
Doth Israel stand before the Eternal One;
Striking his harp with rapt, angelic tone,
Till tribes and nations the Unseen God confess;
Knowing that only where
His face makes white the air

Could such seraphic song have mortal birth,
One saving faith sublime to keep alive on earth.

IX

And therefore with most passionate desire
And longing, man yearned ever to express
Thy majesty, and light, and loveliness,
O Spirit of Beauty, unconsuming fire !
Therefore by ancient Nile
Rose the vast columned aisle,
And on the Athenian Hill the wonder white
Whose shattered ruins are the world's supreme delight.

X

So is it that to thy imperial shore,
Bright Italy ! the generations fly,
Even but once to breathe, or e'er they die,
Where did a godlike race its soul outpour ;
Its birth divine revealing
On glorious wall and ceiling,—
While dome and rhythmic statue, Beauty-wrought,
Declare all human art is but what Heaven hath taught.

XI

Fair Italy ! whose dread and peerless height
The song is of the awful Ghibelline !
Poet ! who 'mid the threefold dream divine
Didst follow Art and Love to the Central Light !
Tell us, O Dante ! tell
What thou dost know so well,
That horror and death are but the shade and foil
Of Beauty, deathless, godlike, and without assoil.

XII

Spirit divine! man falls upon the sod
In awe of thee, in worship and amaze:—
Thou older than the mountains, or the blaze
Of sunsets, or the sun; thou old as God;
As God who did create
Long ere man reached his state
All shapes of natural Beauty that men see,
And his wide universe did dedicate to thee.

XIII

—Ye who bear on the torch of living art
In this new world,—saved for some wondrous fate,—
Deem not that ye have come, alas, too late,
But haste right forward with unfailing heart!
Ye shall not rest forlorn;
Behold, even now, the morn
Rises in splendor from the orient sea,
And the new world shall greet a new divinity.

XIV

Shall greet, ah, who can say! a nobler face
Than from the foam of Cytherean seas:
Loveliness lovelier; mightier harmonies
Of song and color; an intenser grace;
Beauty that shall endure
Like Charis, heavenly-pure;
A Spirit solemn as the starry night,
And full as the triumphant dawn of golden light.

AFTER-SONG

TO ROSAMOND

ROSE of the world,
Bloom of the year,
Birth of the dawn!
By morn's one star
Lighted to life!—
Thou and my songs
Come to the day
Hand clasped in hand.

Flung on this page
May the glow of thy name
Back through each song
Shine with the light
Drawn from the skies—
Thou birth of the dawn,
Flower of the morn,
Rose of the world!

THE GREAT REMEMBRANCE
AND OTHER POEMS



THE GREAT REMEMBRANCE

Read at the Annual Reunion of the Society of the Army of the
Potomac, Faneuil Hall, Boston, June 27, 1893.

COMRADES, the circle narrows, heads grow white,
As once more by the camp-fire's flaring light
We gather and clasp hands, as we have done
These many, many years. So long ago
A part we were of all that glorious show,—
Stood, side by side, 'neath the red battle-sun,—
So long ago we breathed war's thunderous breath,
Knew the white fury of that life-in-death,
So long ago that troubled joy, it seems
The valorous pageant might resolve to splendid dreams.

But no! Too deep 't is burned into the brain!
As well were lightning-scar by summer rain
Washed clean away, when stroke on blinding stroke
Hath torn the rock, and riven the blackened oak.

How oft as down these peaceful streets we pass
All vanishes save, lo! the rutted grass,
Wrecked caissons, frightened beasts, and, merciful God!
The piteous burden of the ensanguined sod!

Yet not all terror doth the memory save
From war's emblazonry and open grave:
In glimpses, flashing like a meteor's light,
We see the army marching in the night;
Or, look! a thousand tents gleam through the black;
Or, now, where quick-built camp-fires flame and crack,

From blaze to shade men stretch o'erwearied limbs,
Chant songs, or wake the hills with chorused hymns ;
Or, ere the dawn makes pale the starry dark,
The fiery signals, spark on trailing spark,
Write on the silent sky their still command,
While the great army moves, as by a single hand.

So LONG ago it seems, so long ago,
Behold, our sons, grown men since those great days,—
Born since the last clear bugle ceased to blow
Its summons down the valley ; since the bays
Shook with the roar of fort and answering fleet,—
Our very children look into our eyes
And find strange records, with a mute surprise ;
As they some curious traveler might greet
Who kept far countries in his musing mind,
Beyond the weltering seas, the mountain-walls behind.

And yet it was this land and not another,
Where blazed war's flames and rolled the battle-cloud.
In all this land there was no home where brother,
Father, or son hurried not forth ; where bowed
No broken-hearted woman when pale Death
Laid his cold finger on the loved one's breath.

LIKE to a drama did the scene unroll —
Some dark, majestic drama of the soul,
Wherein all strove as actors, hour by hour,
Yet breathless watched the whole swift, tragic play.
Faithful did each his little part essay,
Urged to an end unknown by one all-knowing Power ;
While if the drama pauses, now and then,
On the huge stage, 't is for a moment only —
Here at the heart or in some vista lonely,

A single hero or a million men,
And with the tragic theme the world resounds again.

First, in the awful waiting came the shock,
The shame unbearable, the sacred flag assailed —
Assailed in freedom's name by those who freedom mock!
Ah, then the oath, to stand as stands the rock
'Gainst flood and tempest, lest that flag be trailed
And torn, or any star therefrom be lost —
The oath, murmured alone, or where the crowd,
As by a wind of heaven swept and tost,
Passioned its soul to God, and strong men wept aloud.

Then sweet farewell; O bitter-sweet farewell;
O brave farewell! Who were the bravest then,
Or they who went, or waited — women or men?
They who the cheers heard, or the funeral knell?
They who stepped proudly to the rattling drum,
Inflamed by war's divine delirium,
Or they who knew no mad joy of the fight,
And yet breathed on through waiting day and weeping
night?

FAREWELL and forward! O to live it over,
The first wild heart-beat of heroic hours!
Forward, like mountain-torrents after showers!
Forward to death, as to his bride the lover!
Forward, till quick recoils the impetuous flood,
And ends the first dread scene in terror and in blood!

Onward once more, through sun and shivering
storm,—

A monstrous length with wavering bulk enorm,—
Wounded or striking, bringing blood or bleeding,
Onward, still on, the agony unheeding!
Onward with failing heart, or courage high!

Onward through heat, and hunger, and dismay,
Turning the starry night to murderous day !
Onward, with hope appalled, once more to strike, and die!

SO MARCHED, so fought, so agonized, the hosts ;
Battling through forests ; rotting where slow crawls
The deathly swamp-stream ; and like pallid ghosts
Haunting the hospitals, and loathéd prison-walls.
They knew what freedom was, and right to breathe
Clean air who burrowed from the filth and seethe
Of foulest pens, only that dogs might track,
And to the death-pit drag their living corpses back.

Oh, would to Heaven some sights could fade from out
Clear memory's all too melancholy page —
Fade and be gone forever ! Let the shout
Of victory only linger, and the rage
And glory of battle over land and sea,
And all that noblest is in war's fierce pageantry.

Echoes of deeds immortal, O awake !
Tremble to language, into music break,
Till lyric memory takes the old emotion,
And leaps from heart to heart the ancient thrill !
Tell of great deeds that yet the wide earth fill :
How first upon the amazed waves of ocean
The black, infernal, deadly armored-ships
Together rushed, and all the world stood still,
While a new word of war burst from those iron lips ;
How up the rivers thundered the strong fleets ;
How the great captains 'gainst each other dashed
Gigantic armies. What wild welcome meets
Some well-loved chief who, ere those armies clashed,
Rides like a whirlwind the embattled line,
Kindling the stricken ranks to bravery divine !

And, hark, at set of sun, the cheer that greets
Victorious news from far-off armies, flashed
From camp to camp, with roar on answering roar,
Like bellowing waves that track the tempest down the
shore.

But chiefly tell of that one hour of all
When threatening war rolled highest its full tide,
Even to the perilous northern mountain-side
Where Heaven should bid our good cause rise or fall.
Tell of that hour, for never in all the world
Was braver army against braver hurled.
To both the victory, all unawares,
Beyond all dreams of losing or of winning;
For the new land which now is ours and theirs,
Had on that topmost day its glorious beginning.
They who charged up that drenched and desperate slope
Were heroes all — and looked in heroes' eyes!
Ah! heroes never heroes did despise!
That day had Strife its bloodiest bourn and scope;
Above the shaken hills and sulphurous skies
Peace lifted up her mournful head and smiled on Hope.

RUSHED the great drama on its tragic way
Swift to the happy end from that tremendous day.
Happy, indeed, could memory lose her power
And yield to joy alone the glad, triumphant hour;
Happy if every aching heart could shun
Remembrance of the unreturning one;
If at the Grand Review, when mile on mile
And day on day the marching columns passed,
Darkened not o'er the world the shadow vast
Of his foul murder — he the free from guile,
Sad-hearted, loving, and beloved, and wise,

Who ruled with sinewy hands and dreaming eyes.
What soul that lived then who remembers not
The hour, the landscape, ah! the very spot,—
Hateful for aye,— where news that he was slain
Fell like a hammer on the dazed brain!

So LONG ago it was, so long ago,
All, all have passed; the terror and the splendor
Have turned like yesterevening's stormy glow
Into a sunset memory strange and tender.
How beautiful it seems, what lordly sights,
What deeds sublime, what wondrous days and nights,
What love of comrades, ay, what quickened breath,
When first we knew that, startled, quailing, still
We too, even we, along the blazing hill,
We, with the best, could face and conquer death!

GLORIOUS all these, but these all less than nought
To the one passion of those days divine,
Love of the land our own hearts' blood had bought —
Our country, our own country, yours and mine,
Then known, then sternly loved, first in our lives.
Ah, loved we not our children, sisters, wives?
But our own country, this was more than they,—
Our wives, our children, this,— our hope, our love
For all most dear, but more — the dawning day
Of freedom for the world, the hope above
All hope for the sad race of man. For where,
In what more lovely world, 'neath skies more fair,
If freedom here should fail, could it find soil and air?

In this one thought, one passion,— whate'er fate
Still may befall,—one moment we were great!
One moment in life's brief, perplexéd hour
We climbed the height of being, and the power

That falls alone on those who love their kind
A moment made us one with the Eternal Mind.

ONE moment, ah, not so, dear Country! Thou
Art still our passion; still to thee we bow
In love supreme! Fairer than e'er before
Art thou to-day, from golden shore to shore
The home of freemen. Not one stain doth cling
Now to thy banner. Argosies of war
On thy imperial rivers bravely fling
Flags of the nations, but no message bring
Save of peace only; while, behold, from far
The Old World comes to greet thy natal star
That with the circling century returns,
And in the Western heavens with fourfold beauty burns

LAND that we love! Thou Future of the World!
Thou refuge of the noble heart oppressed!
Oh never be thy shining image hurled
From its high place in the adoring breast
Of him who worships thee with jealous love!
Keep thou thy starry forehead as the dove
All white, and to the eternal Dawn inclined!
Thou art not for thyself but for mankind,
And to despair of thee were to despair
Of man, of man's high destiny, of God!
Of thee should man despair, the journey trod
Upward, through unknown eons, stair on stair,
By this our race, with bleeding feet and slow,
Were but the pathway to a darker woe
Than yet was visioned by the heavy heart
Of prophet. To despair of thee! Ah no!
For thou thyself art Hope, Hope of the World thou art!

COMRADES belovéd, see, the fire burns low,
And darkness thickens. Soon will our brief part
On earth forever end, and we shall go
To join the unseen ranks; nor will we swerve
Or fear, when to the silent, great reserve
At last we ordered are — as one by one
Our Captains have been called, their labors done,
To rest and wait in the Celestial Field.
Ay, year by year, we to the dead did yield
Our bravest. Them we followed to the tomb
Sorrowing; for they were worthy of our love;
High-souled and generous, loving peace above
War and its glories: therefore lives no gloom
In this our sorrow; rather pride, and praise,
And gratitude, and memory of old days.

A little while and these tired hands will cease
To lift obedient or in war or peace —
Faithful we trust in peace as erst in war;
And on the scroll of peace some triumphs are
Noble as battles won; though less resounds
The fame, as deep and bitter are the wounds.

But now the fire burns low, and we must sleep
Erelong, while other eyes than ours the vigil keep.
And after we are gone, to other eyes
That watch below shall come, in starry skies,
A fairer dawn, whereon in fiery light
The Eternal Captain shall his signals write;
And shaken from rest, and gazing at that sign,
On shall the mighty Nation move, led by a hand divine.

PART II

"THE WHITE CITY"

I

GREECE was; Greece is no more.
 Temple and town
 Have crumbled down;
 Time is the fire that hath consumed them all. .
 Statue and wall
 In ruin strew the universal floor.

II

Greece lives, but Greece no more!
 Its ashes breed
 The undying seed
 Blown westward till, in Rome's imperial towers,
 Athens reflowers;
 Still westward — lo, a veiled and virgin shore!

III

Say not, "Greece is no more."
 Through the clear morn
 On light winds borne
 Her white-winged soul sinks on the New World's breast.
 Ah! happy West—
 Greece flowers anew, and all her temples soar!

IV

One bright hour, then no more
 Shall to the skies
 These columns rise.

But though art's flower shall fade, again the seed
Onward shall speed,
Quickening the land from lake to ocean's roar.

V

Art lives, though Greece may never
From the ancient mold
As once of old
Exhale to heaven the inimitable bloom;
Yet from that tomb
Beauty walks forth to light the world forever!

THE VANISHING CITY

I

ENRAPTURED memory, and all ye powers of being,
To new life waken! Stamp the vision clear
On the soul's inmost substance. Oh, let seeing
Be more than seeing; let the entranced ear
Take deep these surging sounds, inweaved with light
Of unimagined radiance; let the intense
Illumined loveliness that thrills the night
Strike in the human heart some deeper sense!
So shall these domes that meet heaven's curvéd blue,
And yon long, white imperial colonnade,
And many-columned peristyle endue
The mind with beauty that shall never fade;
Though all too soon to dark oblivion wending —
Reared in one happy hour to know as swift an ending.

II

Thou shalt of all the cities of the world . .
Famed for their grandeur, ever more endure

Imperishably and all alone impearled

In the world's living thought, the one most sure
Of love undying and of endless praise

For beauty only — chief of all thy kind ;
Immortal, even because of thy brief days ;

Thou cloud-built, fairy city of the mind !
Here man doth pluck from the full tree of life

The latest, lordliest flower of earthly art ;
This doth he breathe, while resting from his strife,
This presses he against his weary heart ;
Then, wakening from his dream within a dream,
He flings the faded flower on Time's down-rushing
stream.

III

Oh, never as here in the eternal years

Hath burst to bloom man's free and soaring spirit,
Joyous, untrammelled, all untouched by tears

And the dark weight of woe it doth inherit.
Never so swift the mind's imaginings

Caught sculptured form, and color. Never before,—
Save where the soul beats unembodied wings

'Gainst viewless skies,—was such enchanted shore
Jeweled with ivory palaces like these :

By day a miracle, a dream by night ;
Yet real as beauty is, and as the seas

Whose waves glance back keen lines of glittering light
When million lamps, and coronets of fire,
And fountains as of flame, to the bright stars aspire.

IV

Glide, magic boat, from out the green lagoon,

'Neath the dark bridge, into this smiting glow

And unthought glory. Even the glistening moon
Hangs in the nearer splendor.— Let not go
The scene, my soul, till ever 't is thine own !
This is Art's citadel and crown. How still
The innumerable multitudes from every zone,
That watch and listen ; while each eye doth fill
With joyous tears unwept. Now solemn strains
Of brazen music give the waiting soul
Voice and a sigh — it other speech disdains,
Here where the visual sense faints to its goal !
Ah, silent multitudes, ye are a part
Of the wise architect's supreme and glorious art !

v

O joy almost too high for saddened mortal !
O ecstasy envisioned ! Thou shouldst be
Lasting as thou art lovely ; as immortal
As through all time the matchless thought of thee !
Yet would we miss, then, the sweet, piercing pain
Of thy inconstancy ! Could we but banish
This haunting pang, ah, then thou wouldst not reign
One with the golden sunset that doth vanish
Through myriad lingering tints down melting skies ;
Nor the pale mystery of the New World flower
That blooms once only, then forever dies —
Pouring a century's wealth on one dear hour.
Then vanish, City of Dream, and be no more ;
Soon shall this fair Earth's self be lost on the unknown
shore.

THE TOWER OF FLAME

THE COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION, JULY 10, 1893

I

HERE for the world to see men brought their fairest,
Whatever of beauty is in all the earth ;
The priceless flower of art, the loveliest, rarest,
Here by our inland ocean came to glorious birth.

II

Yet on this day of doom a strange new splendor
Shed its celestial light on all men's eyes :
Flower of the hero-soul,—consummate, tender,—
That from the tower of flame sprang to the eternal skies.

LOWELL

I

FROM the shade of the elms that murmured above thy
birth
And the pines that sheltered thy life and shadowed the
end,
'Neath the white-blue skies thee to thy rest we bore,—
'Neath the summer skies thou didst love, 'mid the
songs of thy birds,
By thy childhood's stream, 'neath the grass and the
flowers thou knewest,
Near the grave of the singer whose name with thine
own is enlaureled,
By the side of the brave who live in thy deathless song,—
Here all that was mortal of thee we left, with our tears,

With our love, and our grief that could not be quenched
or abated ;

For even the part that was mortal, sweet friend and com-
panion !

That face, and that figure of beauty, and flashing eye
Which in youth shone forth like a god's 'mid lesser men,
And in gray-haired, strenuous age still glowed and lus-
tered,—

These, too, were dear to us,—blame us not, soaring spirit !
These, too, were dear, and now we shall never behold
them,

Nor ever shall feel the quick clasp of thy welcoming hand.

II

But not for ourselves alone are we spent in grieving,
For the stricken Land we mourn whose light is darkened,
Whose soul in sorrow went forth in the night-time with
thine.

Lover and laureate thou of the wide New World,
Whose pines, and prairies, and people, and teeming soil,
Where was shaken of old the seed of the freedom of men,
Thou didst love as a strong man loveth the maiden he
woos,—

Not the woman he toys with, and sings to, and, passing,
forgets,—

Whom he woos, whom he wins, whom he weds, his pas-
sion, his pride,

Who no shadow of wrong shall suffer, who shall stand
in his sight

Pure as the sky of the evil her foeman may threat,
Save by word or by thought of her own in her whiteness
untouched,

And wounded alone of the lightning her spirit engenders.

III

Take of thy grief new strength, new life, O Land!
 Weep no more he is lost, but rejoice and be glad forever
 That thy lover who died was born, for thy pleasure, thy
 glory —

While his love and his fame light ever thy climbing path.

August 14, 1891.

THE SILENCE OF TENNYSON

WHEN that great shade into the silence vast
 Through thinking silence passed;
 When he, our century's soul and voice, was hushed,
 We who,—appalled, bowed, crushed,—
 Within the holy moonlight of his death
 Waited the parting breath;
 Ah, not in song
 Might we our grief prolong.
 Silence alone, O golden spirit fled!
 Silence alone could mourn that silence dread.

ON THE DEATH OF A GREAT MAN

WHEN from this mortal scene
 A great soul passes to the vast unknown,
 Let not in hopeless grief the spirit groan.
 Death comes to all, the mighty and the mean.
 If by that death the whole world suffer loss,
 This be the proof (and lighter thus our cross),
 That he for whom the world doth sorely grieve
 Greatly hath blessed mankind in that he once did live.
 Then, at the parting breath
 Let men praise Life, nor idly blame dark Death.

A HERO OF PEACE

IN MEMORY OF ROBERT ROSS: DIED MARCH 6, 1894

I

No bugle on the blast
Calls warriors face to face.
Grim battle being forever past
Gone is the hero-race.

II

Ah no ! there is no peace !
—If liberty shall live
Never may freemen dare to cease
Their love, their life to give.

III

Unto the patriot's heart
The silent summons comes ;
Not braver he who does his part
To the sound of beating drums.

IV

And thou who gavest youth,
And life, and all most dear ;
Sweet soul, impassionate of truth,
White on thy murdered bier !—

V

Thy deed, thy date, thy name
Are wreathed with deathless flowers.
Thy fate shall be the guiding flame
That lights to nobler hours.

THE BATTLE MONUMENT

TRENTON, OCTOBER 19, 1893

SINCE ancient Time began

Ever on some great soul God laid an infinite burden —
The weight of all this world, the hopes of man.

Conflict and pain, and fame immortal are his guerdon !

And this the unfaltering token

Of him, the Deliverer — what though tempests beat,
Though all else fail, though bravest ranks be broken,
He stands unscared, alone, nor ever knows defeat.

Such was that man of men ;

And if are praised all virtues, every fame
Most noble, highest, purest — then, ah ! then,
Upleaps in every heart the name none needs to name.

Ye who defeated, 'whelmed,

Betray the sacred cause, let go the trust ;
Sleep, weary, while the vessel drifts unhelmed ;
Here see in triumph rise the hero from the dust !

All ye who fight forlorn

'Gainst fate and failure ; ye who proudly cope
With evil high enthroned ; all ye who scorn
Life from Dishonor's hand, here take new heart of hope.

Here know how Victory borrows

For the brave soul a front as of disaster,
And in the bannered East what glorious morrows
For all the blackness of the night speed surer, faster.

Know by this pillared sign

For what brief while the powers of earth and hell
Can war against the spirit of truth divine,

Or can against the heroic heart of man prevail.

FAME

FAME is an honest thing,

It is deceived not ;

It passes by the palace gates

Where the crowned usurper waits,

Enters the peasant-poet's cot

And cries : "Thou art the king!"

A MONUMENT BY ST. GAUDENS

THIS is not Death, nor Sorrow, nor sad Hope;

Nor Rest that follows strife. But, oh more dread !

'T is Life, for all its agony serene ;

Immortal, and unmournful, and content.

A MEMORY OF RUBINSTEIN

HE of the ocean is, its thunderous waves

Echo his music ; while far down the shore

Mad laughter hurries — a white, blowing spume.

I hear again in memory that wild storm ;

The winds of heaven go rushing round the world,

And broods above the rage one sphinx-like face.

"HOW PADEREWSKI PLAYS"

I

If songs were perfume, color, wild desire ;
 If poet's words were fire
 That burned to blood in purple-pulsing veins ;
 If with a bird-like thrill the moments throbbed to hours,
 If summer's rains
 Turned drop by drop to shy, sweet, maiden flowers ;
 If God made flowers with light and music in them,
 And saddened hearts could win them ;
 If loosened petals touched the ground
 With a caressing sound ;
 If love's eyes uttered word
 No listening lover e'er before had heard ;
 If silent thoughts spake with a bugle's voice ;
 If flame passed into song and cried, "Rejoice! Rejoice!"
 If words could picture life's, hope's, heaven's eclipse
 When the last kiss has fallen on dying eyes and lips ;
 If all of mortal woe
 Struck on one heart with breathless blow on blow ;
 If melody were tears, and tears were starry gleams
 That shone in evening's amethystine dreams ;
 Ah, yes, if notes were stars, each star a different hue,
 Trembling to earth in dew ;
 Or if the boreal pulsings, rose and white,
 Made a majestic music in the night ;
 If all the orbs lost in the light of day
 In the deep, silent blue began their harps to play ;
 And when in frightening skies the lightnings flashed
 And storm-clouds crashed,

If every stroke of light and sound were but excess of
 beauty;
 If human syllables could e'er refashion
 That fierce electric passion;
 If other art could match (as were the poet's duty)
 The grieving, and the rapture, and the thunder
 Of that keen hour of wonder,—
 That light as if of heaven, that blackness as of hell,—
 How Paderewski plays then might I dare to tell.

II

How Paderewski plays! And was it he
 Or some disbodied spirit which had rushed
 From silence into singing; and had crushed
 Into one startled hour a life's felicity,
 And highest bliss of knowledge — that all life, grief,
 wrong,
 Turn at the last to beauty and to song!

HANDEL'S LARGO

WHEN the great organs, answering each to each,
 Joined with the violin's celestial speech,
 Then did it seem that all the heavenly host
 Gave praise to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
 We saw the archangels through the ether winging;
 We heard their souls go forth in solemn singing;
 "Praise, praise to God," they sang, "through endless
 days,
 Praise to the Eternal One, and nought but praise;"

And as they sang the spirits of the dying
Were upward borne from lips that ceased their sighing;
And dying was not death, but deeper living —
Living, and prayer, and praising and thanksgiving!

THE STAIRWAY

By this stairway narrow, steep,
Thou shalt climb from song to sleep;
From sleep to dream and song once more; —
Sleep well, sweet friend, sleep well, dream deep!

THE ACTOR

I

GLORIOUS that ancient art! —
In thine own form to show the fire and fashion
Of every age and clime, of every passion
That dwells in man's deep heart!

II

Player, play well, not meanly,
Thy part in life, as on the mimic stage!
From highest thought is born art's noblest rage:
Live, act, end all, serenely!

THE STRICKEN PLAYER

WHEN at life's last the stricken player lies,
When throng before his darkened, dreaming eyes
His soul's companions, which more real than —
The human comrades, the live women and men

Of the large world he knew, or the ideal
 Imagined creatures his own art made real;
 Wherein he poured his spirit's very being,
 His soul and body? Are those dim eyes seeing
 Himself as one of Shakespeare's men? Are maids
 And queens he wooed, the kings he was, or knew
 Upon the tragic stage, are these the shades
 That now his visionary hours pursue,
 Attendant on his passing? Listen near!
 What breathed murmurs 'scape those pallid lips
 To which the nations hearkened, ere the eclipse
 Of all that brightness? Now lean close and hear;
 Ah, see that look, sweeter than when he smiled
 Upon the applauding world, while *she* draws near
 And hears a dear voice whisper: "Child, my Child!"

AN AUTUMN DIRGE

(E. F. H.)

I

OH ease my heart, sad song, oh ease my heart!
 In all this autumn pageantry no part
 Hath sorrow! Woods, and fields, and meadows glow
 With jeweled colors. All alone I go
 Amid the poignant beauty of the year
 Too heavy-hearted for one easeful tear.

For she who loved this autumn splendor,
 These flaming marsh-flowers, oak-leaves rich and ten-
 der,—

And who in loving all, made all to me more dear,—
 No more is here,
 No more, no more is here!

Sad song, oh bring some thought
With music from some happy memory caught!
No light for me in all the lovely day
Those eyes being shut that first did lead the way
'Neath these great pines whose green vault hides the sky,
And down the rock-strewn shore where the white sea-
birds cry!

II

All fades but those young, happy hours
And in my soul once more the old joy flowers.
It flowers once more only to bring new pain;
For all in vain,
O song! thou singest in my grieving heart!
Thou hast no art
To bring again the smile I loved so well,
The voice that like a bell
Sounded all moods of sorrow and of laughter,
And the dear presence that in childhood's earliest
thought
And all the bright or darkened days thereafter
Into my life a saddened sweetness brought —
Something of mother and of sister love,
A friendship far above
The ties that bind and loosen as we tread
The throngéd pleasures of life's later days.
Sweet maiden soul, I cannot praise
But mourn thee, mourn thee, to the shadows fled.

III

Shadows, O never more!
For when passed forth thy spirit it did seem
As if against the black a golden door
Were opened and a gleam

From the eternal Light fell on thy face
And made a visible glory in the place.

Ah, well I know

Whatever be the source from whence we flow,
Whate'er the power begot these hearts of ours,—
As the great earth brings forth the summer flowers,—
That power is good, is God, and in her dying room
Humaned itself to sense and lightened all the gloom.

ELEONORA DUSE

IF ever flashed upon this mortal scene
A soul unsheathed, a pale, trembling flame,
That suffered every gust, and yet did cling
With fire unquenchable — it is thine own,
Thou artist of the real! Unto thee
No mirth of life is secret; but, sweet soul,
With what sure art thou picturest human woe!
How natural tears to those Italian eyes —
Shadowing in untold depths whatever grief
Familiar is to mortals!

KELP ROCK

(E. C. S.)

“Rock ’s the song-soil,” truly
(So sang one bard of power);
Therefore *our* poet duly
Built on this rock his tower.
And therefore in his singing
We breathe the salty morning,

We hear the storm-bell ringing,
The "siren's" piercing warning
The sea-winds roaring, sighing,
The long waves rising, falling,
We hear the herons calling,
The clashing waves replying.

CHARLESTON

1886.

Is this the price of beauty! Fairest, thou,
Of all the cities of the sunrise sea,
Yet thrice art stricken. First, war harried thee;
Then the dread circling tempest drove its plow
Right through thy palaces; and now, O now!
A sound of terror, and thy children flee
Into the night and death. O Deity!
Thou God of war and whirlwind, whose dark brow,
Frowning, makes tremble sea and solid land!
These are thy creatures who to heaven cry
While hell roars 'neath them, and its portals ope;
To thee they call,—to thee who bidst them die,
Who hast forgotten to withhold thy hand,—
For thou, Destroyer, art man's only Hope!

AT NIAGARA

I

THERE at the chasm's edge behold her lean
Trembling as, 'neath the charm,
A wild bird lifts no wing to 'scape from harm;
Her very soul drawn to the glittering, green,

Smooth, lustrous, awful, lovely curve of peril; ,
While far below the bending sea of beryl
Thunder and tumult—whence a billowy spray
Enclouds the day.

II

What dream is hers? No dream hath wrought that
spell!

The long waves rise and sink;
Pity that virgin soul on passion's brink,
Confronting Fate,—swift, unescapable,—
Fate, which of nature is the intent and core,
And dark and strong as the steep river's pour,
Cruel as love, and wild as love's first kiss!
Ah, God! the abyss!

THE CHILD-GARDEN

IN the child-garden buds and blows
A blossom lovelier than the rose.

If all the flowers of all the earth
In one garden broke to birth,

Not the fairest of the fair
Could with this sweet bloom compare;

Nor would all their shining be
Peer to its lone bravery.

Fairer than the rose, I say?
Fairer than the sun-bright day

In whose rays all glories show,
All beauty is, all blossoms blow.

While beside it deeply shine
Blooms that take its light divine :
The perilous sweet flower of Hope
Here its hiding eyes doth ope,
And Gentleness doth near uphold
Its healing leaves and heart of gold ; .
Here tender fingers push the seed
Of Knowledge ; pluck the poisonous weed ;
Here blossoms Joy one singing hour,
And here of Love the immortal flower.
What this blossom, fragrant, tender,
That outbeams the rose's splendor ;
Purer is, more tinct with light
Than the lily's flame of white ?
Of beauty hath this flower the whole,
And its name — the Human Soul !

THE CHRIST-CHILD

A PICTURE BY FRANK VINCENT DU MOND

I

DONE is the day of care.
Into the shadowy room
Flows the pure evening light, .
To stem the gathering gloom,
The lily's flame illumine,
And the bowed heads make bright
The heads bowed low in prayer.

II

See how the level rays
Through the white garments pour
Of the holy child, who stands,
With bending brow, to implore
Grace on the toilers' store;
Oh, see those sinless hands!
Behold, the Christ-child prays!

III

Wait, wait, ye lingering rays,
Stand still, O Earth and Sun,
Draw near, thou Soul of God —
This is the suffering one!
Already the way is begun
The piercéd Saviour trod;
And now the Christ-child prays,
The holy Christ-child prays.

A CHILD

I

HER voice was like the song of birds;
Her eyes were like the stars;
Her little waving hands were like
Bird's wings that beat the bars.

II

And when those waving hands were still,—
Her soul had fled away,—
The music faded from the air,
The color from the day.

TWO VALLEYS

YES, 't is a glorious sight,
This valley, that mountain height.
The river plunges and roars
Like the wild sea on its shores
What time in waves enorm
Breaks the gigantic storm.
The wooded mount doth climb
To a thought intense, sublime.
The glory of all I feel ;
But my heart, my heart, will steal
Down the journey of years,
Through the vale of life, and of tears,
Far back to the least of valleys
Where a slow brook curves and dallies,
Where a boy, in the twilight gleam,
Walks alone with his dream.

ON THE BAY

THIS watery vague how vast ! This misty globe,
Seen from this center where the ferry plies,—
It plies, but seems to poise in middle air,—
Soft gray below gray heavens, and in the west
A rose-gray memory of the sunken sun ;
And, where gray water touches grayer sky,
A band of darker gray pricked out with lights —
A diamond-twinkling circlet bounding all ;

And where the statue looms, a quenchless star ;
And where the lighthouse, a red, pulsing flame ;
While the great bridge its starry diadem
Shows through the gray, itself in grayness lost !

WASHINGTON SQUARE

THIS is the end of the town that I love the best.
Oh, lovely the hour of light from the burning west—
Of light that lingers and fades in the shadowy square
Where the solemn fountain lifts a shaft in the air
To catch the skyey colors, and fling them down
In a wild-wood torrent that drowns the noise of the town.
And lovely the hour of the still and dreamy night
When, lifted against the blue, stands the arch of white
With one clear planet above ; and the sickle moon,
In curve reversed from the arch's marble round,
Silvers the sapphire sky. Now soon, ah soon,
Shall the city square be turned to holy ground
Through the light of the moon and the stars and the
glowing flower,—
The Cross of Light,—that looms from the sacred tower.

THE CITY

I

OH, dear is the song of the pine
When the wind of the night-time blows,
And dear is the murmuring river
That afar through my childhood flows ;

And soft is the raindrop's beat
And the fountain's lyric play,
But to me no music is half so sweet
As the thunder of Broadway!

II

Stream of the living world
Where dash the billows of strife!—
One plunge in the mighty torrent
Is a year of tamer life!
City of glorious days,
Of hope, and labor, and mirth,
With room, and to spare, on thy splendid bays
For the ships of all the earth!

A RHYME OF TYRINGHAM

Down in the meadow and up on the height
The breezes are blowing the willows white.
In the elms and maples the robins call,
And the great black crow sails over all
In Tyringham, Tyringham Valley.

The river winds through the trees and the brake
And the meadow-grass like a shining snake;
And low in the summer and loud in the spring
The rapids and reaches murmur and sing
In Tyringham, Tyringham Valley.

In the shadowy pools the trout are shy,
So creep to the bank and cast the fly!
What thrills and tremors the tense cords stir
When the trout it strikes with a tug and whirl
In Tyringham, Tyringham Valley!

At dark of the day the mist spreads white,
Like a magic lake in the glimmering light ;
Or the winds from the meadow the white mists blow,
And the fireflies glitter,— a sky below,—
In Tyingham, Tyingham Valley.

And oh, in the windy days of the fall
The maples and elms are scarlet all,
And the world that was green is gold and red,
And with huskings and cider they 're late to bed
In Tyingham, Tyingham Valley.

Now squirrel and partridge and hawk and hare
And wildcat and woodchuck and fox beware !
The three days' hunt is waxing warm
For the count up dinner at Riverside Farm
In Tyingham, Tyingham Valley.

The meadow-ice will be freezing soon,
And then for a skate by the light of the moon.
So pile the wood on the hearth, my boy !
Winter is coming ! I wish you joy
By the light of the hearth and the moon, my boy,
In Tyingham, Tyingham Valley.

THE BERKSHIRES,

ELSIE

“ Do you love me ? ” Elsie asked,
And her rose-leaf dimples masked
'Neath a pleading look, the while
On her pouting lips a smile

Hovered, yet was out of sight
Like a star that 's hid at night
By a filmy, flying cloud.
“Do you love me?” scarce aloud
Lovely Cousin Elsie said.
“Why no answer, Cousin Ed?
Do you hate me then, or why
From Your Highness no reply?”
So the chiding witch ran on:
“In a moment I 'll be gone;
Then too late, Sir No Gallant!
Quick! I 'll tell my precious aunt
That you love me not,” she cries,
“That you hate me and despise.”
Flash the great, gray, long-lashed eyes;
Half in earnest now the girl;
Down the pretty corners curl
Of the tiny mouth, and lo!
From those eyes two tearlets flow;—
Just two kisses, and they go!
Like a sunburst after showers,
Like white light upon the flowers,
Now again the dimples show.

But she could not understand
Why so long the answer waited
For the loved and not the hated,
While he held that little hand,
And like a bird she sang and said,—
Half in earnest, half in fun,—
“Do you love me, Solemn One?
Do you love me, Cousin Ed?
Do you love me, do you love me?
Love me, love me, Cousin Ed?”

INDIRECTION

I SAW not the leaf

But its shadow trembling, trembling down.

I faced to northward, to my grief,

When from the southern sky a crimson meteor lit the
star-dark town.

I saw not naked Love

Lean from his porphyry throne above

And touch her heart to flame,

Yet on her brow I saw the swift, sweet, virgin shame.

“AH, BE NOT FALSE”

I

AH, be not false, sweet Splendor!

Be true, be good;

Be wise as thou art tender;

Be all that Beauty should.

II

Not lightly be thy citadel subdued;

Not ignobly, not untimely.

Take praise in solemn mood;

Take love sublimely.

THE ANSWER

THROUGH starry space two angels dreamed their flight,
'Mid worlds and thoughts of worlds, through day and
night.

Then one spake forth whose voice was like the flower
That blossoms in the fragrant midnight hour.

This white-browed angel of the other asked :

“ Of all the essences that ever basked
In the eternal presence ; of all things,
All thoughts, all joys, all dreads, all sorrowings
Amid the unimaginable vast,—
Being, or shall be, or forever past,—
Profound with dark, or hid in endless light—
Which of all these most deep and infinite ? ”

Then did the elder speak, the while he turned
On him who asked clear eyes that slowly burned
The spirit through, like to a living coal :

“ No depth there is so deep as woman's soul.”

HOW DEATH MAY MAKE A MAN

I

DEATH is a sorry plight,
It bringeth unto man
End of all delight.
Yet many a woeful wight
Only dying can
Quit him like a man.

II

Dawdling, drawling, silly,
 Maundering, scarce a man,
Driven willy-nilly,
When he 's dying will he
 Run as once he ran,
 Or quit him like a man?

III

Vile from out the wrack
 Crawls he less than man;
Cowering in his track
Beaten, broken, black;
 Curse him if you can —
 Death may make him man.

IV

In life the wretch did nought
 Worthy of a man;
Now by Death he 's caught,
What a change is wrought!
 Whom the world did ban
 Quits life like a man.

V

Braced stiff against the wall,
 Behold, at last, a man.
Lost — life and honor, all!
At Death's quick touch and call
 See, the craven can
 Quit him like a man.

"CAME TO A MASTER OF SONG"

I

CAME to a master of song
 And the human heart
 One who had followed him long
 And worshiped his art;
 One whom the poet's singing
 Had lured from death,
 Joy to the crushed soul bringing
 And heaven's breath;

II

Came to him once in an hour
 Of terror and stress,
 And cried, "Thou alone hast power
 To save me and bless;
 Thou alone, pure heart and free,
 Canst pluck from disaster,
 If to a wretch like me
 Thou wilt stoop, O master!"

III

Answered the bard with shame,
 And sorrow and trembling:
 "Was I false, was my song to blame?
 Was my art dissembling?
 I of all mortals the saddest,
 The quickest to fall,
 And song of mine highest and gladdest
 Repentance all!"

BARDS

I

SOME from books resound their rhymes —
Set them ringing with a faint,
Sorrowful, and sweet, and quaint
Memory of the olden times,
Like the sound of evening chimes.

II

Some go wandering on their way
Through the forest, past the herds,
Laughing maidens, singing birds;
On their sylvan lutes they play —
Danceth by the lyric Day!

III

Bards there be the deep sky under
Who in high, authentic verse
Mysteries and moods rehearse
With a voice like Sinai's thunder,
Chanting to a world of wonder.

IV

And those have sung whose melody,
Drawn from out the living heart
With a quick, unfaltering art,
Hath power to make the listener cry:
"God in heaven! It is I."

MERIDIAN

I

HENCEFORTH before these feet
Sinks the downward way ;
A little while to greet
The light and life of day,
Then night's slow fall
Ends all.

II

Now forward, heart elate,
Though steep the pathway slope.
Time yet for love and hate,
Joy, and joy's shadow, hope,
Ere night's slow fall
Ends all.

III

Still the warm sky is blue,
No fleck the sunlight mars ;
'Twixt hills the sea gleams through ;
With twilight come the stars ;
And night's slow fall
Ends all.

IV

In the cool-breathing night
The starry sky is deep.
Still on through glimmering light
Till we lie down to sleep ;
Then let night's fall
End all.

EVENING IN TYRINGHAM VALLEY

WHAT domes and pinnacles of mist and fire
Are builded in yon spacious realms of light
All silently, as did the walls aspire
Templing the ark of God by day and night !
Noiseless and swift, from darkening ridge to ridge,
Through purple air that deepens down the day,
Over the valley springs a shadowy bridge.
The evening star's keen, solitary ray
Makes more intense the silence, and the glad,
Unmelancholy, restful, twilight gloom —
So full of tenderness, that even the sad
Remembrances that haunt the soul take bloom
Like that on yonder mountain.

Now the bars
Of sunset all burn black ; the day doth fail,
And the skies whiten with the eternal stars.
Oh, let thy spirit stay with me, sweet vale !

PART III

A WEEK'S CALENDAR

I — NEW YEAR

EACH New Year is a leaf of our love's rose;
It falls, but quick another rose-leaf grows.
So is the flower from year to year the same,
But richer, for the dead leaves feed its flame.

II — A NEW SOUL

To SEE the rose of morning slow unfold
Each wondrous petal to that heart of gold;
To see from out the dark, unknowing night
A new soul dawn with such undreamed-of light,
And slowly all its loveliness and splendor
Pour forth as stately music pours, magnificently tender!

III — "KEEP PURE THY SOUL"

KEEP pure thy soul!
Then shalt thou take the whole
Of delight;
Then, without a pang,
Thine shall be all of beauty whereof the poet sang —
The perfume, and the pageant, the melody, the mirth
Of the golden day, and the starry night;
Of heaven, and of earth.
Oh, keep pure thy soul!

IV—"THY MIND IS LIKE A CRYSTAL
BROOK"

I

THY mind is like a crystal brook
Wherein clean creatures live at ease,
In sun-bright waves or shady nook.
Birds sing above it,
The warm-breathed cattle love it,
It doth sweet childhood please.

II

Accursed be he by whom it were undone,
Or thing or thought whose presence
The birds and beasts would loathly shun,
Would make its crystal waters foully run,
And drive sweet childhood from its pleasure.

V—"ONE DEED MAY MAR A LIFE"

ONE deed may mar a life,
And one can make it ;
Hold firm thy will for strife,
Lest a quick blow break it !
Even now from far on viewless wing
Hither speeds the nameless thing
Shall put thy spirit to the test.
Haply or e'er yon sinking sun
Shall drop behind the purple West
All shall be lost — or won !

VI — THE UNKNOWN

How strange to look upon the life beyond
Our human cognizance with so deep awe
And haunting dread ; a sense as of remorse,
A looking-for of judgment, a great weight
Of things unknown to happen ! We who live
Blindly from hour to hour in very midst
Of mysteries ; of shapeless, changing glooms ;
Of nameless terrors ; issues vast and black ;
Of airy whims, slight fantasies, and flights
That lead to unimaginable woe :
The unweighed word cloying the life of love ;
One clod of earth outblotting all the stars ;
Some secret, dark inheritance of will,
And the scared soul plunges to conscious doom !
Thou who hast wisdom, fear not Death, but Life !

VII — IRREVOCABLE

WOULD the gods might give
Another field for human strife ;
Man must live one life
Ere he learns to live.
—Ah, friend, in thy deep grave,
What now can change, what now can save ?

PART IV

SONGS

"BECAUSE THE ROSE MUST FADE"

I

BECAUSE the rose must fade,
Shall I not love the rose ?
Because the summer shade
 Passes when winter blows,
Shall I not rest me there
In the cool air ?

II

Because the sunset sky
 Makes music in my soul,
Only to fail and die,
 Shall I not take the whole
Of beauty that it gives
While yet it lives ?

III

Because the sweet of youth
 Doth vanish all too soon,
Shall I forget, forsooth,
 To learn its lingering tune ;
My joy to memorize
In those young eyes ?

IV

If, like the summer flower
 That blooms,— a fragrant death,—
 Keen music hath no power
 To live beyond its breath,
 Then of this flood of song
 Let me drink long !

V

Ah, yes, because the rose
 Doth fade like sunset skies ;
 Because rude winter blows
 All bare, and music dies —
 Therefore, now is to me
 Eternity !

“FADES THE ROSE”

I

FADES the rose ; the year grows old ;
 The tale is told ;
 Youth doth depart —
 Only stays the heart.

II

Ah, no ! if stays the heart,
 Youth can ne'er depart,
 Nor the sweet tale be told —
 Never the rose fade, nor the year grow old.

THE WINTRY HEART

I

ON the sad winter trees
The dead, red leaves remain,
Though to and fro the bleak winds blow,
And falls the freezing rain.

II

So to the wintry heart
Clings color of the past,
While through dead leaves shudders and grieves
The melancholy blast.

HAST THOU HEARD THE NIGHTINGALE?

I

YES, I have heard the nightingale.
As in dark woods I wandered,
And dreamed and pondered,
A voice passed by all fire
And passion and desire;
I rather felt than heard
The song of that lone bird;
Yes, I have heard the nightingale.

II

Yes, I have heard the nightingale.
I heard it, and I followed;
The warm night swallowed

This soul and body of mine,
As burning thirst takes wine,
While on and on I pressed
Close to that singing breast;
Yes, I have heard the nightingale.

III

Yes, I have heard the nightingale.
Well doth each throbbing ember
The flame remember;
And I, how quick that sound
Turned drops from a deep wound!
How this heart was the thorn
Which pierced that breast forlorn!
Yes, I have heard the nightingale.

“IN THAT DREAD, DREAMED-OF HOUR”

I

IN that dread, dreamed-of hour
When in her heart love's rose flames into flower,
'T is never, never *yes*,
But *no, no, no*, whate'er the startled eyes confess.

II

Her frail denial at last
Swept clean away like burnt leaves in the blast
No longer *no, no, no*!
But *yes*, forever *yes*, while love's red rose doth blow.

“ROSE-DARK THE SOLEMN SUNSET”

I

ROSE-DARK the solemn sunset
That holds my thought of thee;
With one star in the heavens
And one star in the sea.

II

On high no lamp is lighted,
Nor where the long waves flow,
Save the one star of evening
And the shadow star below.

III

Light of my Life, the darkness
Comes with the twilight dream;
Thou art the bright star shining,
And I but the shadowy gleam.

“WINDS TO THE SILENT MORN”

I

WINDS to the silent morn;
Waves to the ocean;
Voice to the song unsung;
Song to emotion;
Light to the golden flower;
Bird to the tree;
Love to the heart of love,
And I to thee!

II

Dawn to the darkened world;
Hope to the morrow;
Music to passion; and
Weeping to sorrow;
Love to the heart that longs;
Moon to the sea;
Heaven to the earthborn soul,
And thou to me.

THE UNRETURNING

I

SILENT, silent are the unreturning!
What though word may reach to them, and yearning,
Never through the stillness of the night,
Never in the daytime or the dark
Comes the long-lost voice, or smile of light;
Lifts no hand from sea or sunken bark.
Silent, silent are the unreturning!

II

Silent, silent are the unreturning!
Silent they?—or are we undiscerning?
Child, my child, is this thy answering voice
Murmuring far down the mountain lone?
Evening's smile, that whispers: "Heart, rejoice!"
Mother mine, is this thy very own?
Nay! nay! Silent are the unreturning;
Silent, silent are the unreturning!

TWO YEARS

I

OH, that was the year the last of those before thee;
All my world till then but dark before the dawn.
If then I had died, oh, never had I known thee,
Never had beheld thee; I who won, who own thee;
Who chose thee, who sing thee, crown thee, and adore
thee;
Oh, death it were indeed to die before that dawn!

II

This was the year when first I did behold thee,
Thou who on my darkness dawned with lyric light.
This the golden hour when first thy lover found thee,
Followed and beguiled thee, and with his singing bound
thee;
When all the world with music rang to drown thee and
enfold thee —
Thou who turned the darkness to song, and love, and
light!

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